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A ROMANTIC HISTORIOSOPHY

The Philosophy of History of Pierre-Simon Ballanche

BY

ARTHUR McCALLA



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*This book is dedicated to my parents,
Dennis and Kathleen McCalla*

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Le philosophie de l'histoire constitue l'apport véritablement original du romantisme dans l'histoire des idées. Non seulement, dès la Révolution, l'Ecole française s'efforce de déterminer les fondements historiques de la mission libératrice qu'elle assigne d'avance au XIX^e siècle, mais la philosophie pure fait une large place à l'histoire dans sa méthode. Alors, nulle métaphysique, nulle synthèse, ne semblent plus possibles sans une philosophie d'histoire.

Henri Evans

[Ballanche est] encore un demi-ignoré—parce qu'on a cru trop facilement que le Romantisme n'était guère qu'une affaire d'école littéraire, parce qu'on s'est trop peu mis à *l'intérieur* des idées générales qui servaient en réalité à la lutte et au triomphe des idées esthétiques et littéraires nouvelles.

Ferdinand Baldensperger

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

- OC* Ballanche, Pierre-Simon. *Oeuvres complètes*, 6 vols. Paris: Bureau de l'Encyclopédie des connaissances utiles, 1833. Reprinted Genève: Slatkine, 1967.
- VE* Ballanche, Pierre-Simon. *La Ville des Expiations et autres textes*. Edition préparée par l'ERA 447 du CNRS sous la direction de Jean-René Derré. Lyon: Presses Universitaires de Lyon, 1981.
- VH* Ballanche, Pierre-Simon. *Vision d'Hébal*, éditée avec une introduction et des notes par A. J. L. Busst. Genève: Droz, 1969.
- BML Bibliothèque Municipale de Lyon
- BN Bibliothèque Nationale

INTRODUCTION

Pierre-Simon Ballanche (1776–1847) is today chiefly remembered not for his intellectual labours but for his chivalrous devotion to Juliette Récamier. While the last twenty years have seen a renewal of interest in Ballanche, notably among French scholars, Ferdinand Baldensperger's observation that Ballanche's contribution to early nineteenth-century French thought has gone largely unheeded remains true.¹ Ballanche has not yet received his due, particularly among historians, as a religious and social thinker whose works display in microcosm much of the intellectual history of early nineteenth-century France: the search for a new social order to terminate the chaos of the Revolutionary years, the drift away from orthodox Catholicism to heterodox religiosity, the transition from a static to a dynamic world view, and the role of historical awareness in this transition. Moreover, because Ballanche's thought engages so many strands of the intellectual life of his day (Enlightenment, Catholic Traditionalism, Illuminism, Liberalism, social Catholicism, utopian socialism, etc.), this study contributes to our understanding of numerous aspects of the intellectual history of Restoration and July Monarchy France.

Part One of this study discusses Ballanche's early works, relating them, and their ideas of expiation and progress, to Ballanche's experience of the Revolution and to Catholic Traditionalism. Part Two demonstrates the transformation of Ballanche's thought, and of progress and expiation within it, in his 1818–1820 works, and relates this transformation to the intellectual and political life of the Restoration. Part Three examines how, in his major work, the unfinished multi-volume *Essais de Palingénésie sociale* (1827–1831), Ballanche constructs a unified philosophy of history by defining progress and expiation in relation to each other by means of the concepts of palingenesis, social evolution, and initiation. Placing his philosophy of history in the context of contemporary historiography, mythography, Illuminism, and other Romantic philosophies of history, I show that it can best be understood, both in its particularity and its genealogy,

¹ Ferdinand Baldensperger, "Les Années 1827–1828 en France et au dehors" in *Revue des Cours et Conférences* 30 (1929): 10.

as a historiosophy. Part Four discusses the impact of the fall of the Restoration on Ballanche's thought, and charts the reception of his philosophy of history during the July Monarchy. The fusion of progressivism and providentialism in Ballanche's historiosophy gave him a leadership role among those in the early 1830s who sought progressive social reform through religious regeneration. Although Ballanche's moment in the sun was brief, his influence is discernible on a wide variety of religious and social theorists and movements up to 1848 and even beyond.

This intellectual historical study reads Ballanche's thought as a coherent philosophy of history that is both unique in its content and representative of its period in its structural elements and objective. In concentrating on Ballanche's philosophy of history, this study restricts itself to Ballanche's ideas about collective humanity in this world. It does not examine, therefore, although I do not thereby mean to suggest that these aspects of his thought are any less "Ballanchean" than his philosophy of history, Ballanche's views on the spiritual life of the individual or his speculations regarding the afterlife or other worlds, and considers his poetics and theory of language only to the extent that they are relevant to his ideas about history.

D. G. Charlton has usefully distinguished two senses of "philosophy of history". The first, "speculative", sense refers to the search for a meaningful pattern to history, a search predicated on the conviction that history is moving inexorably toward the fulfilment of some transcendental purpose. The second, "analytical or critical", sense examines the epistemological basis of historical enquiry.² While present day philosophers of history understand their discipline almost exclusively in the latter sense, Ballanche, like most of his contemporaries, studied history in order to discern therein the working out of God's purpose for humanity. It is in the speculative sense that philosophy of history constitutes the truly original contribution of Romanticism to the history of ideas,³ and that it is to be understood in this study.

Ballanche is a contemporary of the first generation of French Romantics, the generation of Chateaubriand, Senancour, Nodier, and Lamartine, all of whom were his friends. Romanticism, however, is a vastly more complex movement than is generally realized. Ballanche

² D. G. Charlton, *Secular Religions in France, 1815-1870* (London: Oxford UP, 1963), 155.

³ Henri Evans, *Louis Lambert et la philosophie de Balzac* (Paris: J. Corti, 1951), 179.

must be understood not solely in relation to aesthetic battles between Classicists and Romantics but against the full range of the intellectual life of early nineteenth-century France. "Romantic" in the title of this study signifies "of the Romantic period".

The concepts of expiation and progress are fundamental to Ballanche's philosophy of history. Expiation conventionally refers to the meriting of salvation through the elimination of guilt by means of suffering. According to the Christian doctrine of Atonement, the only sufficient expiation for sin is the suffering and death of Christ. Humanity, incapable of expiating its own sin, participates in Christ's unique act of expiation through grace. Secondary uses of expiation, however, may refer to human suffering, either in the sense of the consequences of the Fall or of making restitution for a particular crime. In the latter sense, the Restoration, for example, celebrated ceremonies of expiation on behalf of France for the crimes against God of the Revolution. In Ballanche's day the concept of expiation was associated with the reactionary religious right lead by Joseph de Maistre and Louis de Bonald, while *Idéologue* and Liberal heirs of the Enlightenment scorned it as a shameful relic of superstition. The doctrine of progress, in contrast, was both the product and a celebration of Enlightenment rationalism. Turgot and Condorcet conceived of progress as the cumulative and irreversible increase in knowledge and happiness derived from the application of reason to all aspects of life. For Ballanche's contemporaries, belief in progress usually went hand in hand with anti-authoritarian, anti-Christian convictions.

Whatever their differences over expiation and progress, Restoration thinkers of all allegiances were unanimous in their conviction of the importance of the French Revolution. Not only do scholars point to the Revolution as a pivotal event in the rise of historical awareness,⁴ but Ballanche and his contemporaries themselves recognized that the Revolution had changed the way they thought about their world. Victor Cousin did not hesitate to identify it as the formative event in the intellectual life of his (and Ballanche's) generation:

⁴ "It is not too strong to say that [early nineteenth-century thinkers] were obsessed by the problem of determining what had been gained, or lost, during the Revolutionary epoch." Hayden White, "Romanticism, Historicism, Realism: Towards a Period Concept for Early Nineteenth Century Intellectual History" in *The Uses of History*, ed. Hayden V. White (Detroit: Wayne State UP, 1968), 50.

Pour nous que la tempête perpétuelle des révolutions a précipités tour à tour dans des situations si diverses; qui avons vu tomber tant d'empires, de sectes, tant d'opinions . . . , nous sommes las, nous autres modernes, de cette face du monde qui change sans cesse. . . . Et il était naturel que nous finissions par nous demander ce que signifiaient ces jeux qui nous font tant de mal; si la destinée humaine reste la même, gagne, ou perde, avance ou recule au milieu des révolutions, ce qu'elles enlèvent et ce qu'elles apportent; si elles ont un but, s'il y a quelque chose de sérieux dans ces agitations et dans le sort général de l'humanité.⁵

Ballanche's philosophy of history addresses precisely these questions posed by Cousin. The French Revolution stands to *Palingénésie sociale* as the fall of Rome does to Augustine's *City of God*. Ballanche's philosophy of history demonstrates the link between the characteristic historical sense of early nineteenth-century French thinkers and their urgent need to understand and explain the troubling events of the Revolution. Though his interpretation of the Revolution changed over time, understanding it remained, from his first work to his last, his central preoccupation.

My sources for this study are Ballanche's published works, his unpublished papers and letters at the Bibliothèque Municipale de Lyon and the Bibliothèque Nationale, and published collections of letters by and to Ballanche and his friends. Ballanche's principal works (excluding *Du Sentiment* and *Vision d'Hébal*) plus various minor pieces were collected in a four volume quarto *Oeuvres* in 1830 (Paris: Barbézat). Three years later the *Oeuvres* were republished, their contents slightly rearranged, in six duodecimo volumes as *Oeuvres complètes* (Paris: Bureau des connaissances utiles). The 1833 edition has been reproduced by Slatkine (Genève: 1967) in a single folio volume that retains the 1833 pagination. It is to this edition that all references in this study to Ballanche's *Oeuvres complètes* correspond. Two other major works, *Ville des Expiations* and *Formule générale de l'histoire de tous les peuples*, were largely completed, but published only in excerpts in a variety of journals between 1829 to 1835. The former, and parts of the latter have been published in the twentieth century (see Bibliography). The main collection of Ballanche's papers at the Bibliothèque Municipale de Lyon fills twenty-four dossiers. It includes drafts of published works, manuscripts of unpublished works, diverse notes and

⁵ Victor Cousin, "Supplément de l'ouvrage" to Dugald Stewart, *Histoire abrégée des sciences métaphysiques, morales et politiques*, trans. J.-A. Buchon, 3 vols. (Paris: 1820–1823), 3:334–335. Quoted in *VH*, 14–15.

prospectuses, and an extensive description of a mechanical invention that enlivened Ballanche's later years. Several slim dossiers, containing a few letters and loose notes, complete the Ballanche collection at the Bibliothèque Municipale de Lyon. Particularly relevant among the collections at the Bibliothèque Nationale are the papers of Juliette Récamier, which include a large number of Ballanche's letters, and the four volumes of Ballanche's letters to A. J. Q. Beuchot, the bulk of which concern the day to day operations of the Ballanche family publishing house. Several collections of or including Ballanche's letters have been published: Amélie-Cyvoct Lenormant, *Souvenirs et correspondances tirés des papiers de Madame Récamier*, 2 vols. (Paris: Lévy, 1860); Edouard Herriot, *Mme. Récamier et ses amis* (Paris: Plon-Nourrit, 1909); Alfred Marquiset, *Ballanche et Mme. d'Hautefeuille: Lettres inédites de Ballanche, Chateaubriand, Sainte-Beuve, Mme. Récamier, Mme Swetchine, etc.* (Paris: Champion, 1912); and Claude-Julien Bredin, *Correspondance philosophique et littéraire avec Ballanche*, éd. Auguste Viatte (Paris: Boccard, 1928). Ballanche's letters to Juliette Récamier have now been gathered together in Agnès Kettler, *Lettres de Ballanche à Madame Récamier, 1812-1845* (Paris: Champion, 1996). This valuable work provides extensive annotation and is prefaced by a three-hundred page study. Of the several compilations of letters to and from various of Ballanche's friends that have been published, the most important are: André-Marie Ampère, *Correspondance du grand Ampère*, éd. Louis de Launay (Paris: Gauthier-Villars, 1936); A.-M. Ampère and J.-J. Ampère, *Correspondance et souvenirs de 1805 à 1864*. Recueillis par Madame H. C[heuveux], 2 vols. (Paris: Hertz, 1875); and Claude-Julien Bredin, *Lettres inédites de C. J. Bredin à A. M. Ampère, au pasteur Touchon et à Mme. Touchon*, éd. Louis de Launay (Lyon: Rey, 1936).

My interpretation of these sources builds on previous studies of Ballanche. I wish particularly to acknowledge the work of Paul Bénichou, Frank Paul Bowman, A. J. L. Busst, Léon Cellier, Jean-René Derré, Oscar A. Haac, Brian Juden, Agnès Kettler, Arlette Michel, and Auguste Viatte. Although I do not always agree with these scholars' interpretations of Ballanche, this study would be markedly poorer without their work.

PART ONE

REVOLUTION AND THE LYON WORKS

La douleur seule compte dans la vie, et il n'y a de réel que les larmes.

“Deuxième Fragment”

CHAPTER ONE

THE LYON TERROR AND THE *EPOPEE LYONNAISE*

The origins of the Ballanche family lie in Morteau (Doubs), a small village in a valley, known locally as Combe d'Abondance, on the Swiss border almost due east of Besançon, where they were agricultural labourers.¹ Hugues-Jean Ballanche, the father of Pierre-Simon, was born at Morteau on 21 January 1748. Both of his parents were dead by 1762 and Hugues-Jean, in possession of a fairly large inheritance, left the Franche Comté shortly thereafter. His activities and whereabouts over the next few years are uncertain. He is next heard of in Lyon in 1772, by which date he had completed his education, acquired a cultivated manner, and made two false starts in business, first as a grain dealer and then as a cloth merchant, before finally establishing himself in the publishing business as a protégé of Aimé Delaroche, the owner and founder of the respected Halles de la Grenette publishing house in Lyon.² On 9 August 1772 Delaroche stood as Hugues' witness at his marriage to Claudine Poulat of Grigny-sur-Rhône, a village fifteen kilometers from Lyon. Hugues' marriage into this fairly wealthy local family completed his ascent into the Lyon bourgeoisie begun with his association with Delaroche.

Over the next few years Hugues and Claudine had three children. Anne, born in 1773, who died in infancy, was followed by Aimée, born in March 1775, and Pierre-Simon, born 4 August 1776. The infant boy, named after his uncle and godfather (a parish priest in the diocese of Besançon), was baptized in the parish church of Saint-Nizier on 5 August.³ Pierre-Simon was a frail, sickly child who was frequently taken to his maternal grandparents at Grigny to recuperate in the country. In part because of his health and in part because his doting parents could not bear to be separated from their only son, Pierre-Simon was not sent away to school. He received instruction

¹ Gaston Frainnet, *Essai sur la philosophie de P.-S. Ballanche* (Paris: Picard, 1903), 7.

² On Aimé Delaroche and the importance of Halles de la Grenette in Lyon, see Aimé Vingtrinier, *Histoire de l'Imprimerie à Lyon de l'origine jusqu'à nos jours* (Lyon: Storck, 1894), 396–398.

³ Frainnet, *Essai sur la philosophie de P.-S. Ballanche*, 8–9, 12.

in Latin, Greek, and mathematics from tutors, but otherwise his education progressed haphazardly through the contents of his father's library and whatever the enthusiastic young reader could find at the publishing house. Later, after the Revolution and when his health permitted, Pierre-Simon attended a school run by Oratorians. The Ballanches were sincere Catholics, and while they placed more emphasis on the practice of piety than on dogma, young Pierre-Simon received a thorough religious education.

The Lyon Terror

The early events of the Revolution were welcomed by the majority of the Lyon bourgeoisie, including the Ballanches. In their *cahiers de doléances* submitted to the Estates General, both workers and bourgeois had stressed the importance of restoring Lyon's economy in general rather than particular class interests. In the factional world of Revolutionary politics, the Lyonnais were most closely associated with the Rolandist wing of the Girondiste party.⁴ A local Jacobin club was formed, under the leadership of Joseph Chalier, which agitated for the renaming of buildings, streets, etc., circulated petitions, posted placards, denounced counterrevolutionaries, and stressed the need for vigilance in defence of the Revolution. The Jacobins, however, played a relatively minor role in the affairs of the city until late in 1792. On learning of the September (1792) Massacres, local Jacobins rioted and paraded about the city with the heads of eleven suspected counterrevolutionaries on pikes, while the Jacobin Central Club urged the adoption of severe measures against moderates. Despite this Jacobin show of strength, moderates continued to control the city.

The execution of Louis XVI on 21 January 1793 and the launching of the dechristianization campaign of Year II exacerbated tensions between moderates and extremists. In early February, Chalier and the local Jacobins seized control of the Commune by force. When the moderates were able to regain control of the city, Chalier appealed

⁴ On the Revolution at Lyon, see W. D. Edmonds, *Jacobinism and the Revolt of Lyon, 1789–1793* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990); Louis Trénard, *Lyon: De l'Encyclopédie au Préromantisme* (Paris: PUF, 1958), 1:221–249, 323–335; Charles Riffaterre, *Le Mouvement Antijacobin et Antiparisien à Lyon et dans le Rhône-et-Loire en 1793*, 2 vols. (Lyon: Rey, 1912, 1928); and Albert Champdor, *Vieilles chroniques de Lyon*, quatrième série (Lyon: A. Guillot, 1977), 124–143.

to the National Convention, denouncing the Lyonnais moderates as royalist reactionaries. The National Convention, which itself had long identified Lyon as a hotbed of counterrevolutionary activity, responded by dispatching representatives on mission. Upon arrival in Lyon, the representatives lost no time in purging the Conseil général de la Commune of "counterrevolutionaries" and installing Jacobin candidates. The Ballanches, alarmed by the growing power of Montagne extremism, had turned firmly against the Republic after the execution of Louis XVI and the launching of the dechristianization campaign. As Lyon drifted toward insurrection, the Ballanches moved into the monarchist and Catholic resistance.⁵

The Lyonnais Jacobins, now in complete control of the city, responded to the March (1793) Crisis by imposing their own version of the Terror. They had been insisting since 1790 that Lyon was riddled with counterrevolutionary agitators and were now, with the Crisis as evident proof of treachery, determined to wipe out all opposition. In early April 1793 the Jacobins formed a local Committee of Public Safety, again under the leadership of Chalier, appointed revolutionary committees, instituted a forced loan on the rich, and petitioned the Convention in Paris for the establishment of a revolutionary tribunal to deal with suspected traitors. The Lyon Jacobins, however, were not a united body and their divisiveness proved fatal. An attempt by an elite to form a "Société des Jacobins" as a steering committee within the Jacobin Club alienated many of the rank and file. The moderates capitalized on the divisions within the Jacobins by retaking control of a majority of the sections. When the Jacobin-controlled Commune refused to follow the sections into moderation, the sections demanded its removal and the arrest of Chalier. Demonstration turned to riot, and riot to insurrection. On 29 May 1793 the town hall was stormed in a carefully planned military operation, the Jacobin members of the Conseil général ousted, and many prominent Jacobins, including Chalier, arrested.⁶

⁵ Louis de Loménie, "M. Ballanche" in *Galérie des Contemporains illustrés*, 10 vols. (Paris: René, 1840-1847), 2:10.

⁶ See the account of the insurrection by a participant in *Histoire du siège de Lyon, ou Récit exact des événements qui se sont passé dans cette ville, sous le commandement de générale Précý, et des horreurs qui s'y commises par ordre des Proconsuls Collot-D'Herbois, Albitte, Fouché (de Nantes) et autres scélérats*. Par un officier de l'état-major du siège, échappé au carnage et retiré en Suisse (Lausanne: 1795). Republished in *Lyon et Nantes contra la Terreur*, textes réunis et présentés par Mireille Brunet (Paris: France-Empire (Lire la Révolution), 1989, 21-74), 36-37. Another contemporary account may be found in

Two days later, the Paris Jacobins began their purge of the Girondins from the Convention. On learning of the coup d'état, the Lyon moderates decided that outright rebellion was the only means of saving their city from the Paris extremists. A few days later, on 6 June, federalist rebellions broke out in Bordeaux, Marseille, and Toulon. At first, the Convention responded to the events in Lyon with restraint, dispatching representatives to try to calm the situation and reach a compromise. The Lyonnais, however, rejected any negotiation. On 29 June they celebrated a festival marking their overthrow of the Jacobins. A people's commission formed a week later declared that Lyon would no longer acknowledge the laws and decrees of the Convention passed after 31 May. The Convention answered this de facto declaration of secession on 3 and 12 July with dire warnings of the consequences of rebellion and ordered Lyon to submit. Lyon answered these ultimatums on 16 July by guillotining Chalier and preparing its defences against inevitable retaliation. The Convention formally declared Lyon to be in a state of insurrection and massed its soldiers outside the city's walls. On 8 August, the siege of Lyon began. Though quickly isolated and short of food, Lyon held out through sixty-two days of bombardment. On 9 October, the exhausted and half-starved city surrendered to Georges Couthon, Robespierre's friend and colleague from the Committee of Public Safety.

Good classicists, the *conventionnels* remembered their Plutarch: *delenda est Carthago*.⁷ Just as Cato had feared that the survival of Carthage threatened Rome, so in the eyes of the Convention the very existence of Lyon mocked the ideals and achievements of the Revolution. On 12 October 1793 the Convention promulgated this decree:

Collection Documentation Régionale, *La Révolution à Lyon (1789–1799)*. *Documents d'archives locales* (Lyon: Centre régionale de documentation pédagogique, ca. 1970), Document III 47.

⁷ "[T]he fact that the Romans went to war at all was very largely the consequence of Cato's advice. . . . Whenever his opinion was called for on any subject [in the Senate], he invariably concluded with the words, 'and furthermore it is my opinion that *Carthage must be destroyed*'". Plutarch, *Cato the Elder*, 26–27. The Jacobins' identification of themselves with the virtuous republicans of early Rome made the association of their enemies with Carthage a natural one. Shortly after the fall of Lyon, a member of the Committee of Public Safety, Prieur of the Marne, addressed the Jacobins of Lorient in Brittany with the words: "London must be destroyed, and London shall be destroyed! Let us rid the globe of this new Carthage." Quoted in R. R. Palmer, *The Year of the Terror: Twelve Who Ruled France, 1793–1794* (London: Blackwell, 1989); first published as *Twelve Who Ruled* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1941), 211.

Article III

La ville de Lyon sera détruite, tout ce que fut habité par le riche sera démoli. . . .

Article IV

Le nom de Lyon sera effacé du tableau des villes de la République. Le réunion des maisons conservées portera désormais le nom de *ville affranchie*.

Article V

Il sera élevé sur les ruines de Lyon une colonne qui attestera à la posterité les crimes et la punition des royalistes de cette ville avec cette inscription: *Lyon fit la guerre à la Liberté, Lyon n'est plus. Le dix-huitième jour du premier mois, l'An deuxième de la République française, une et indivisible.*⁸

The terrifying proclamation notwithstanding, Couthon's actions were relatively restrained. His military tribunal condemned one hundred of the principal rebels to death, while a parallel civilian tribunal, the Commission de justice populaire, ordered an additional 109 executions. Couthon seems to have done all he could to minimize the number of executions. The Convention in Paris, however, was in no mood for moderation. It considered Lyon the heart of counterrevolution and was determined to make an example of it. Couthon, sensing that terror was imminent and wanting no part of it, had himself transferred to Clermont-Ferrand by early November. He was replaced by men of a very different stamp: Jean-Marie Collot d'Herbois and Joseph Fouché.

Collot d'Herbois had made a name for himself as a bitter enemy of the bourgeoisie within the Hébertist wing of the Montagne. Elected to the Committee of Public Safety on the morrow of the *journée* of 5 September 1793, which had made "terror the order of the day", he soon proved himself, in Palmer's words, "the most insanely violent of the Twelve [Terrorists]".⁹ Collot, moreover, bore a grudge against the Lyon bourgeoisie dating from his years as an actor and theatre manager in that city. Fouché, the future Duc d'Otranto and Minister of Police under Bonaparte, was in 1793 a radical republican convinced of the necessity of a policy of terror. He had served the Convention in various posts as representative on mission and

⁸ Collection Documentation Régionale, *La Révolution à Lyon*, Document V 65.

⁹ Palmer, *The Year of the Terror*, 68.

came to Lyon, if not thirsting for vengeance like Collot, nevertheless determined to suppress all vestiges of counterrevolution.¹⁰ Collot d'Herbois and Fouché immediately established a *Commission temporaire*, composed exclusively of non-Lyonnais. The commission imposed punitive taxes on the rich, accelerated dechristianization, and proclaimed Chalier a martyr in a ceremony of public veneration. While the *Commission temporaire* concerned itself with these acts of petty vengeance, another of Collot and Fouché's creations, the *Commission révolutionnaire*, which replaced Couthon's cumbersome tribunals, undertook the serious work of rooting out all opposition to the Convention. In the 130 days of its operation, this efficient body ordered 1667 persons shot or guillotined. This number amounts to over ten per cent of the total number of executions in France during the Terror. Sixty-four per cent of the Lyon victims came from the bourgeoisie and upper orders, compared to twenty-eight per cent for the rest of France.¹¹

The disparity in the manner in which Couthon, on the one hand, and Collot d'Herbois and Fouché on the other, carried out the Convention's decrees against Lyon admirably illustrates the content of the concepts of innocence and guilt under the Terror. Couthon reserved punishment for active rebels; only those caught bearing arms when the forces of the Convention entered the city were executed. For Collot, however, this view betrayed a metaphysical error. Innocence and guilt are not attributes of action, but of being. *Le peuple*, embodying virtue, is alone innocent; anyone who separates himself from *le peuple* is necessarily guilty. The Lyonnais had separated themselves from *le peuple*, therefore all Lyonnais were guilty, whether or not they had actually borne arms.¹²

Having risen to become an associate in Aimé Delaroche's publishing house, Hugues Ballanche retained his position when Aimé's grandson, Aimé-Marie-Vatard Delaroche, took over direction of the firm in 1792. When Vatard Delaroche was killed in the fighting during the siege, Hugues and a partner, Charles-François Millanois (Vatard's

¹⁰ Palmer, *The Year of the Terror*, 159–160.

¹¹ Palmer, *The Year of the Terror*, 170.

¹² Notions of innocence and guilt during the Terror are discussed throughout Carol Blum, *Rousseau and the Republic of Virtue: The Language of Politics in the French Revolution* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1986). The trial of Louis XVI accords a parallel example: for Saint-Just and his allies, Louis' character and actions were irrelevant. A king is by definition separate from *le peuple*; Louis was guilty by the very fact that he ruled *over* his subjects. In Saint-Just's programmatic phrase, "no one can reign innocently". Blum, 173–175.

father-in-law), bought control of the firm, renaming it "Ballanche & François Millanois". Their proprietorship was short-lived. In the aftermath of the fall of Lyon they were arrested after being denounced as royalists by one of their printers, a Jacobin activist and friend of Chaliier named de' Stefani. Millanois, who as a lieutenant-colonel of artillery had fought in the insurgent army, was shot on 1 January 1794. Hugues Ballanche, also sentenced to die, was saved when his workers marched *en masse* to petition Collot d'Herbois for his release, swearing that "le citoyen Ballanche avait toujours été le père des ouvriers".¹³ Hugues was released, but the business was confiscated by order of the *Commission temporaire* and awarded to de' Stefani, in whose hands it remained until 1795 and under whom it operated as printer for the municipality.¹⁴ On recovering ownership of the business, Hugues Ballanche bought out Millanois' widow and entered into a partnership with a man named Nicolas Barret under the name "Ballanche et Barret". Barret was an unpleasant man and the partnership was dissolved after five years. By April 1802 the Ballanches were the sole owners of the firm, now operating as "Ballanche, père et fils".

From the early days of the Revolution, local Jacobins, in an effort to inscribe their break with the old social, political, and religious order on the city itself, had begun to rename Lyon's streets, buildings, and districts in honour of heros and events of the Republic.¹⁵ The process of renaming was greatly accelerated after the fall of the city. A decree of the Conseil générale de la Commune, dated 10 January 1794, applauded the efforts of three districts to replace the "noms gothiques de l'ancien régime" with "noms plus dignes de la liberté et d'un peuple républicain" and invited other districts to emulate these "bons patriotes [qui] ne laisse[nt] échapper aucune occasion de détruire toutes les traces de la tyrannie et de la superstition".¹⁶ The Paris Convention, however, was no longer content to rename; it demanded not merely a nominal but a literal effacement of the old

¹³ Loménie, "M. Ballanche", 8.

¹⁴ Frainnet, *Essai sur la philosophie de P.-S. Ballanche*, 10–11; Vingtrinier, *Histoire de l'Imprimerie à Lyon*, 402–403, 416–417. (Vingtrinier seems unaware of Ballanche's arrest and mentions only Millanois.) The anonymous author of *Histoire du Siège de Lyon* mentions a "Stéphanis" among the Lyonnais Jacobins who were most active in collaborating with the representatives from Paris in the aftermath of the siege. *Histoire*, 68 n. 2.

¹⁵ For specific instances of renaming, see Gilbert Gardes, *Lyon, l'Art et la Ville*, 2 vols. (Lyon: CNRS, 1988), 1:61.

¹⁶ Collection Documentation Régionale, *La Révolution à Lyon*, Document V 77.

city. In accordance with the decree of 12 October 1793, Couthon organized brigades of unemployed *canuts* (silk weavers) to carry out the demolition of the city. An official report signed by Couthon, two other Representatives of the Convention, and the municipal officers of Ville-Affranchie describes the speech, possibly by Couthon, that prefaced one particular work of destruction, raising it to the level of solemn ceremony:

Au nom de la souveraineté du peuple outragée dans cette ville, en exécution du décret de la Convention Nationale et de nos arrêtés, nous frappons de mort ces habitations du crime, dont la royale magnificence insultait à la misère du peuple et à la simplicité des mœurs républicaines. Puisse cet exemple terrible effrayer les générations futures, et apprendre à l'univers que si la Nation Française, toujours grande et juste, sait honorer et récompenser la vertu, elle sait aussi abhorrer le crime et punir les rebelles.¹⁷

Despite the ferocious rhetoric of this speech, however, demolition under Couthon was half-hearted, more symbolic than real. Once again, it was the arrival of Collot d'Herbois and Fouché that signalled the onset of significant destruction.

Meanwhile, the Convention decided that after Lyon had been destroyed, its population deported, and a victory column raised over the ruins, a new, regenerated community should be established. The new community, however, should not be a proud commercial city, but a rustic village of thatched huts inhabited by transplanted Parisian *sans-culottes*.¹⁸ Though Collot d'Herbois was transferred to Toulon in January 1794 and Fouché returned to Paris that spring, the demolitions and executions at Lyon did not end until well after the coup d'état of 9 Thermidor (27 July 1794) that overthrew the Jacobins and ended the Terror. It was not until 7 October 1794 that the Convention rescinded its order for the destruction of Lyon. Five days later, on the anniversary of its issuance of the decree of destruction, the Convention formally reintegrated Lyon into *la patrie* by declaring the city to be no longer in a state of rebellion, restoring its old name, and abrogating the order to raise a column inscribed with the words "Lyon fit la guerre à la liberté, Lyon n'est plus".¹⁹ While Collot and

¹⁷ Collection Documentation Régionale, *La Révolution à Lyon*, Document V 66.

¹⁸ Gardes, *Lyon, l'Art et la Ville*, 1:62. Gardes associates this vision of a chastised Lyon with the late eighteenth-century conceit, inspired by Canaletto and Hubert Robert, for the representation of ruined cities in bucolic landscapes.

¹⁹ Collection Documentation Régionale, *La Révolution à Lyon*, Document VI 95.

Fouché's depredations had not utterly effaced Lyon, a great deal of damage had been done: in addition to the destruction caused by bombardment during the siege itself, the old ramparts of the Croix-Rousse district, the château de Pierre-Scize, the façades of a number of town houses on (the aristocratic) place Bellecour, and a hundred or so houses in the (bourgeois) Saint-Clair and Terreaux quarters had been destroyed, the city's most beautiful squares torn up, and many streets remained blocked with rubble.²⁰ The damage to the city's fabric may also stand metaphorically for the psychological damage to its inhabitants. Few families had emerged without the loss of a close relative or friend.

Epopée Lyonnaise

Pierre-Simon Ballanche had spent the months of the Lyon Terror at Grigny with his mother and maternal grandparents. There, he recalled, he passed his days dreaming of a tranquil life of friendship and poetry, metamorphosing the estate at Grigny into a new garden of Epicurus.²¹ This idyll was shattered when he returned to Lyon immediately after the fall of Robespierre. Owing to his fragile health, Pierre-Simon's parents had not told him the full story of what had happened in Lyon. The sight of so much of the city in ruins, the loss of the family business, and the news of so many friends, his own as well as his father's,²² killed traumatised him. His health turned severely worse. Desperate for a cure for his son's terrible headaches, Hugue permitted a charlatan to experiment on Pierre-Simon. The measures taken not only made his headaches worse but caused the bones of his jaw and lower skull to decay. Other doctors were consulted and the unanimous opinion was that only a trepan operation could arrest the osteomyelitis. The terrible pain of this operation, which Pierre-Simon endured courageously, was only part of the price it exacted: he had also to suffer a painful convalescence lasting three

²⁰ Gardes, *Lyon, l'Art et la Ville*, 1:62. The city was eventually rebuilt, but Lyon's devastated economy made recovery slow. Lyon did not attain its pre-1789 level of prosperity until about 1825. On the rebuilding of Lyon, see Gardes, 1:65–81.

²¹ Ballanche, *Du Sentiment, considéré dans ses rapports avec la littérature et les arts* (Lyon: Ballanche et Barret, an IX–1801), 103–104.

²² "Tous les amis de ma jeunesse/Dorment dans le cercueil." "Chant Funèbre Sur Les Héros De Lyon" in *Du Sentiment*, 286.

years, a large scar amounting to a deformity on the left side of his face, and periodic attacks of headaches throughout his life.²³

During his lengthy convalescence, for the course of which he did not leave his parents' house, Pierre-Simon read extensively and worked out his emotional and intellectual reactions to the Lyon Terror in his first known composition, the *Epopée Lyonnaise* (ca. 1795). In his first published work, *Du Sentiment* (1801), Ballanche tells us that he sketched out the ideas for an *Epopée Lyonnaise* during the Terror. Victor de Laprade, Ballanche's disciple in later years, states that Ballanche wrote the *Epopée* at Grigny during the Terror.²⁴ The problem with both of these claims is that Ballanche knew very little about what had happened at Lyon during the Terror until he returned from Grigny after 9 Thermidor. He may well have conceived the notion of responding in some manner to the Revolution while at Grigny, but the *Epopée* must largely post-date 9 Thermidor. Although Ballanche hinted in *Du Sentiment* that he might one day publish the *Epopée*,²⁵ it never appeared and in the "Préface Générale" to his 1830 *Oeuvres*, Ballanche regretfully informs his readers that the manuscript of this youthful work has been lost. Ballanche always remembered the *Epopée* with fondness; according to Laprade, Ballanche on his deathbed expressed regret over its loss.²⁶ Happily, some traces of the *Epopée* have survived. In addition to Ballanche's précis of it in the "Préface Générale", a fragment of the *Epopée* is preserved among Ballanche's papers at the Bibliothèque Municipale de Lyon.²⁷ These two sources form the basis of the following discussion.

The *Epopée Lyonnais* bears witness to the heroism of Ballanche's fellow citizens during the insurrection and siege of 1793 and the terrible reprisals that followed. Set fifteen centuries in the future, the *Epopée* is the story of a traveller from America in a Europe that has long since declined from its former splendour. Its cities have been destroyed or abandoned and its people live scattered about the coun-

²³ Frainnet, *Essai sur la philosophie de Ballanche*, 14–15.

²⁴ *Du Sentiment*, 284; Victor de Laprade, *Ballanche, sa vie et ses écrits* (Lyon: Boitel, 1848), 14.

²⁵ *Du Sentiment*, 284.

²⁶ Laprade, *Ballanche*, 14. Laprade's authority is sound on this point as he was himself present.

²⁷ *OC*, 1:1–5; BML, MS 1806–1810, Dossier 16. An early draft of the passage from the *Oeuvres* may be found in a sheaf of miscellaneous notes in Ballanche's hand-writing catalogued as MS 2392 (17), BML.

tryside in small, isolated communities. The traveller stumbles on a shepherds' village built on the site where once Lyon had stood. No memory survives of the city except obscurely in an annual festival called the *Fête des Martyrs*, which is being celebrated on the day of the traveller's arrival. No one knows the origin of this solemn festival, though it is said that it was established long ago to commemorate the noble actions and great sufferings of those who defended a just cause against a cruel race. Further, legend states that a shining crown appeared in the sky on the day the festival was first celebrated. Based on what he sees and hears during the festival, plus written and archaeological evidence he discovers, the traveller reconstructs Lyon's heroic past and the horrors of the siege.

The first paragraph of the fragment preserved in Lyon recounts the *Ozymandias*-like musings of the traveller on finding himself amid the ruins of the once great city. The rest of the fragment records the traveller's description of the *Fête des Martyrs*:

Nous étions dans le plus beau mois de l'année. Je m'éveille avec l'aurore. Une musique grave et sérieuse retentissait dans l'air. Les hommes, les femmes, les enfants, les vieillards sortent de leurs maisons, s'assemblent devant le temple saint. Un vieillard en sort; c'est le prêtre vêtu de ses longs habits de lin. Tous traversent en silence, et vont se placer dans les barques. Bientôt les rameurs frappent en cadence l'eau du Rhône. Enfin on arrive dans une plaine immense, au milieu de laquelle se trouvait un champ entouré des peupliers. Une chapelle s'élève au milieu du champ: le prêtre offre la victime; et montant ensuite dans la chaise de vérité, il parla à peu-près en ces mots.

Voici quinze siècles que nous célébrons la fête des Martyrs. La nuit des temps couvre l'origine de l'institution de cette fête. Nous savons seulement que son origine est sainte. Un abominable tyran qui vivait à cette époque détruisait la civilisation de l'Europe. Enfant de toutes les doctrines pernicieuses, il ne fit que réaliser les rêves insensés de tous les rêveurs. Mais avant, Lyon avait courageusement résisté à toutes les théories mensongères. Vingt-cinq ans de révolutions horribles causèrent la mort, la ruine des ses enfans. Enfin elle succomba avec le reste de l'Europe. [End of fragment]

This passage yields enough clues to permit the identification of the *Epopée Lyonnaise* as a direct response, and not merely a vague memorial, to the Lyon Terror. The *Fête des Martyrs* takes place "in the most beautiful month of the year". This dating is less than precise, but a note to Ballanche's *Du Sentiment* allows us to identify the exact month and day of the Festival. Here Ballanche reflects on appropriate forms

of commemoration for the victims of the siege,²⁸ in places virtually paraphrasing the *Epopée*. Ballanche's suggestions include a "fête commémorative", which by its description is a representation of the *Fête des Martyrs* of the *Epopée*, to be held annually on 29 May. This choice of date can hardly be arbitrary; it is the very day of Lyon's 1793 uprising against the Jacobins. The date of the *Fête*, then, links it firmly to the events at Lyon.

When read against the decrees of the Convention ordering the destruction of Lyon, moreover, the *Epopée* may be seen as a conscious inversion of the Jacobins' decrees in which the wishes of the Convention are presented as fulfilled in order to proclaim not the virtue but the wickedness of the Revolution. Let us recall that the decree of 12 October 1793 had ordered Lyon to be destroyed, its name effaced from the maps of the Republic, and a memorial raised to its crimes; a subsequent decree registered the Convention's plan to rebuild Lyon as a rural village populated with Parisian sans-culottes; and Couthon's speech of 24 October 1793 expanded on the notion of Lyon's punishment as an edifying example for future generations of *patriotes*. In the *Epopée*, Lyon has indeed been destroyed and its name forgotten. As the Convention intended, a rustic village now stands in its place and a festival commemorates, albeit anonymously, the events of the Revolution at Lyon. The gathering together of the villagers during the Festival recalls the Jacobin ideal of *la patrie*, but inverted, since it is led not by a *patriote* but by a priest, and celebrates not the *République, une et indivisible* but the community of the faithful. The affirmation of the subordination of the secular to the religious is confirmed by both the divine approbation of the *Fête* (the shining crown) and by Ballanche's attribution of the Revolution to the impious doctrines of the Enlightenment: "Enfant de toutes les doctrines pernicieuses, il ne fit que réaliser les rêves insensés de tous les rêveurs". Ballanche's irony is marvellous: ruined Lyon attests to posterity not its crime but its virtue; nameless, it convicts the Jacobins of tyranny. Ballanche allows the Revolution to accomplish its intentions

²⁸ Ballanche, *Du Sentiment*, 284–286. A monument to the victims of the siege was in fact raised in 1795 on the Brotteaux plain where so many of them had been executed. This monument, a white cenotaph, incense burners on the corners, and surmounted by a thin column bearing a funerary urn, was destroyed by fire. A second monument, raised in 1814–1819 and reflecting the vogue for Egypt under the Empire, was a large funerary chapel in the shape of a pyramid. See Gardes, *Lyon: l'Art et la Ville*, 2:199–200.

in order to demonstrate that its accomplishment is the destruction of civilization and ultimately of itself. The *Epopée Lyonnaise* is nothing less than an anti-text to the decrees of the Convention during the Lyon Terror.

The question of the presence of the notions of expiation and progress in the *Epopée Lyonnaise* may be dealt with summarily. The mysterious offering of a “*victime*” by the priest during the *Fête des Martyrs* indicates the nature of the historical martyrs’ deaths: they died as victims to the Terror. While the martyrs undoubtedly receive recompense in heaven, their deaths in no way prepare for a new order of society on earth since France, along with the entire European civilization, has been destroyed by the tyranny of the Revolution.²⁹ Thus there is no notion of expiation in the *Epopée*. Rather, “cette oeuvre de douleur et de larmes”, as Ballanche later called it,³⁰ is simply a work of commemoration; it is Ballanche’s own humble version of the celestial shining crown with which he blessed the inaugural celebration of the *Fête des Martyrs*. The notion of progress is equally foreign to the *Epopée*. On the contrary, the Revolution has brought about the regression of Europe into a backward and ignorant continent. Rather than the linear progress of Condorcet, Ballanche’s image recalls Vico’s *corsi* and *recorsi*.³¹ And while civilization does seem to have continued in some fashion in the Americas, Ballanche remains pessimistic about the ultimate fate of any civilization. The opening lines of the fragment present the traveller as a exile, his native land, torn by factions, about to replay the sad destiny of Europe: “Exilé de ma patrie, déplorant les maux que lui font les factions, j’étais venu chercher quelques repos sur le vieux continent de l’Europe”.

²⁹ The twenty-five years mentioned in the text is puzzling. Twenty-five added to 1789 brings us to 1814, the year of the First Restoration. Yet the *Epopée* was composed ca. 1795. It is possible that the twenty-five years is a later interpolation, but Ballanche says in the 1830 “Préface Générale” that the manuscript of the *Epopée* has been lost for some time, and nowhere indicates that he ever thought of revising it. In any case, the point is that Lyon has been utterly destroyed (the twenty-five years marks the ruin, not the re-establishment of Lyon), so it would be thematically inappropriate to allude to the Restoration. It is more likely that Ballanche arbitrarily selected twenty-five as the number of years for the playing out of the revolutionary destruction in his epic.

³⁰ *Du Sentiment*, 284.

³¹ Ballanche’s view of the intellectual causes of the Revolution aligns so nicely with Vico’s “barbarism of reflection” that, in light of Ballanche’s later enthusiasm for Vico, it is worth noting that Vico’s works were at this time unknown to him.

CHAPTER TWO

FROM *DU SENTIMENT* TO *ADIEUX A ROME*

By 1796 Pierre-Simon, now aged twenty, had convalesced sufficiently to join the Lyon literary society *Amicitiae et litteris*. This society and its successor, the *Cercle littéraire*, were important to Ballanche's intellectual development on two counts: they gave him a critical but encouraging audience for his writings and introduced him to several young men about his own age who shared his literary and intellectual concerns and who became lifelong friends. Ballanche's closest friends from this group were Jacques Roux-Bordier, Jean-Baptist Dugas-Montbel, Joseph-Marie Degérando, Camille Jordan, and especially Claude-Julien Bredin and André-Marie Ampère. Let us acknowledge the extraordinary talent concentrated in this group of young Lyonnais. The illustrious scientific career of Ampère is well known. Degérando and Jordan attained eminence in politics and scholarship, while Dugas-Montbel became famous as a translator of Homer and represented the Rhône in the Chambre des Députés during the early years of the July Monarchy. Bredin, a veterinary surgeon by profession, devoted his free time to the study of theosophical writers, above all Jakob Boehme. Roux alone of this group was unable to reconcile his intellectual quest with the demands of daily life; he killed himself in 1821.

In 1797 Ballanche read a draft of a new work, *Du Sentiment, considéré dans ses rapports avec la littérature et les arts*, to a meeting of *Amicitiae et litteris*. Despite encouragement from his friends and his father, Ballanche would not permit *Du Sentiment* to be published until Bonaparte's 1801 Concordat with Pope Pius VII convinced him that the anti-Christian atmosphere of the Revolutionary years had dissipated sufficiently to allow a work espousing religious views in emotional language a fair hearing.¹ *Du Sentiment* thus appeared only in 1801 (Lyon: Ballanche et Barret; Paris: Calixte Volland). That Ballanche had judged

¹ Cf. Louis de Loménie: "In '93 one spoke of 'principles', after Thermidor, of 'sentiments'". "M. Ballanche" in *Galérie des Contemporains illustrés*, 10 vols. (Paris: René, 1840-1847), 2:13. See also Gaston Fraïnnet, *Essai sur la philosophie de P.-S. Ballanche* (Paris: Picard, 1903), 17. Chateaubriand similarly delayed the publication of *Génie du christianisme* until the ratification of the Concordat in 1802.

the intellectual climate correctly is demonstrated by the massive success the next year of a work very similar in tone and content to *Du Sentiment*, Chateaubriand's *Génie du christianisme*. Unfortunately, Pierre-Simon was no René; whereas *Génie* was the product of a great writer in full possession of his material, *Du Sentiment* was a hesitant effort, awkwardly written and in desperate need of a ruthless editor.

Though *Du Sentiment* earned Ballanche election into the Académie de Lyon, it aroused little interest beyond his native city. It seemed, in fact, that *Du Sentiment* would pass unnoticed by the cultural arbiters in Paris until, in March 1802, it was selected as the platform for the Abbé de Feletz's debut as a literary critic in the authoritative *Journal des Débats*.² The *Débats* was then at the head of a classical reaction and Feletz, eager to make a name for himself, launched a savage attack on the young author.³ Feletz charged Ballanche with having hopelessly confused two distinct genres, philosophic discourse and dithyrambic poetry, with the result that where the reader expects to find cool, precise reasonings, he is confronted with a tangle of juxtaposed subjects whose only point of continuity is the impassioned language and uncontrolled imagery in which they are expressed. Feletz concluded his summation with this damning sentence: "Il est évident que le citoyen Ballanche n'a fait que ramasser les différents amplifications, les morceaux de déclamations qu'il avait composés étant écolier, et les réunir en un volume: nul ordre, nul méthode, nul enchaînement . . .".⁴ The only other review of *Du Sentiment* by a Paris journal, a much milder anonymous three-part effort in the *Journal de Paris* (27 germinal, 3 and 4 floréal, an X [April 1802]), failed to mitigate the effect of Feletz's review. Ballanche was deeply hurt by the reception accorded *Du Sentiment*; it would be many years before he again consented to the publication of a work: "J'ai quatorze ans de ma vie persuadé qu'il n'y avait en moi aucun talent réel".⁵ Nevertheless, while taking refuge in the family business and presenting himself to the world as the junior partner in the firm of "Ballanche, Père et

² The collaboration of Charles-Marie Dorimond de Feletz (1767–1850) with the *Journal des Débats* endured until 1830, during which time he was named Inspecteur de l'Université (1820) and received into the Académie française (1826). See Charles M. Desgranges, *La Presse littéraire sous la Restauration, 1815–1830* (Paris: 1907; reprinted Genève: Slatkine, 1973), 86–87.

³ See C.-A. Sainte-Beuve, *Portraits contemporains*, 5 vols. (Paris: Lévy, 1869–1871), 2:12.

⁴ Feletz, "Du Sentiment" in *Journal des Débats*, 27 ventôse, an X.

⁵ Ballanche to Récamier, 15 February 1819, in Agnès Kettler, *Lettres de Ballanche à Madame Récamier, 1812–1845* (Paris: Champion, 1996), 440.

Fils”, he continued in private to work out his ideas and to write.

Du Sentiment sank so fast under the weight of Feletz’s ridicule that few contemporaries remembered the Lyonnais’ quirky work amid the furour created by Chateaubriand’s *Génie du christianisme*. The anonymous reviewer in the *Journal de Paris*, however, noted the similarities between these two works and speculated on the possible relationship between them, observing that the very phrase “génie du christianisme” occurs in *Du Sentiment*. Modern commentators have taken up the discussion and most agree that while each man learned of the other’s work through Louis de Fontanes, Chateaubriand incorporated more of Ballanche’s ideas in his work than vice versa.⁶ Nevertheless, the debt is not great, and it has recently been demonstrated that Chateaubriand did not lift the phrase “génie du christianisme” from Ballanche.⁷ Ballanche himself, in later years, was anxious to avoid any embarrassment to Chateaubriand that speculation of this sort might cause, and this is one reason why he declined to include *Du Sentiment* in his *Oeuvres* of 1830. He also, remembering Feletz, considered it to be juvenilia and did not deem it worthy of being reprinted, or so he said: “[II] ne m’a rien offert que j’eusse pu être tenté de sauver de l’oubli”.⁸

If we turn to the work itself, and ask what are the ideas beneath the riotous imagery that so offended Feletz, we discover that *Du Sentiment* is not simply a work of aesthetics, as its title might imply, but a study of human emotion and feeling as manifested in religion and politics as well as in literature. Ballanche set out to demonstrate that poetics and morality have a common source in *sentiment*:

Toutes ces considérations m’ont porté à croire que ce pourrait être un bon ouvrage, qu’une poétique dégagée de tout l’appareil scolastique, une poétique où l’on démontrerait, en remontant à l’origine de nos facultés et de nos affections, que la morale et les principes des arts d’imitation ont une source commune, le sentiment.⁹

⁶ See Joseph Buche, *L’Ecole mystique de Lyon* (Paris: Alcan, 1935), 49–84. The debate is well summarized in Albert Joseph George, *Pierre-Simon Ballanche: Precursor of Romanticism* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1945), 21–24.

⁷ J. C. Berchet, “*Du Sentiment au Génie du Christianisme*” in *Société Chateaubriand Bulletin* (1993): 77–84.

⁸ *OC*, 1:1.

⁹ Ballanche, *Du Sentiment*, 6–7. Translating *sentiment* is tricky since the word has come to denote mawkish emotional indulgence in English whereas in French it is a neutral term for the affective faculties. To indicate that Ballanche is using the word in the latter sense, I shall leave it untranslated, as it were, by means of an italic typeface.

Ballanche's definition of *sentiment* (derived, according to Roland Mortier, from Bernardin de Saint-Pierre's *Etudes de la Nature* [1784])¹⁰ is complex, but the gist of it is that *sentiment* is a triple faculty, corresponding to the triple nature of human beings. To our *animalité*, *personnalité*, and *spiritualité* correspond beauty, conscience, and faith. These three affectivities together form our *humanité*. Beauty in art, virtue in the moral life, and truth in religion arise from the exercise of this triple faculty. Ballanche does not mention political and social institutions in his definition, but since, as we shall see below, stability and justice in the political and social realms depend on true religion, they too fall within the orbit of *sentiment*, and are accordingly treated in several chapters of *Du Sentiment*.

One of Ballanche's editorial responsibilities was to oversee the production of the various journals the firm published. It was in the course of his duties as editor of the *Bulletin de Lyon* that Ballanche met Charles Fourier, who had joined the *Bulletin* staff in March 1802. At first Fourier wrote light pieces, often in verse, aimed at the *Bulletin's* female readership. Soon he was permitted to present his own ideas, which he did in the articles "Harmonie universelle" (11 frimaire, an XII), "Triumvirat continental et paix perpétuelle sous trente ans" (25 frimaire), "Lettre au grand juge" (4 nivôse), and "Acceptation des lettres de change" (27 nivôse). While Ballanche's social works post-date Fourier's early publications, a direct influence is doubtful. Sainte-Beuve recorded that years later, in early the 1830s, Ballanche knew little about the details of the *Quatre Mouvements*, though he accorded Fourier respect as a critic of industrial economy and agreed with him in general terms that humanity has a terrestrial mission to complete. Modern scholars concur. Herbert Bourgin concludes that Ballanche did not study Fourier's theories and that it is difficult to identify any point of exchange between the two men. Jonathan Beecher similarly states in his recent biography of Fourier that though Ballanche later introduced Fourier to Charles Nodier's salon at the Arsenal, he admired Fourier primarily as a geographer.¹¹

¹⁰ Mortier, "Le traité 'Du Sentiment' de P.-S. Ballanche: Un programme littéraire antiphilosophique et post-révolutionnaire" in *Approches des Lumières* (Paris: Klincksieck, 1974), 324.

¹¹ Sainte-Beuve, *Portraits Contemporains*, 2:44; Bourgin, *Fourier. Contribution à l'étude du socialisme française* (Paris: Société Nouvelle de Librairie et d'Édition, 1905), 41, 143–150; Beecher, *Charles Fourier: The Visionary and His World* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), 103.

Pope Pius VII passed through Lyon in November 1804 on his way to preside over Bonaparte's coronation, and spent three days in the city on his return trip in April 1805. The papal visit, in the course of which Pius VII commended the city for its loyalty to the Church during the Revolution, was a major event in Lyon. Ballanche, caught up in the excitement, published a short book in which he gives a vivid and pious account of the enthusiastic welcome the Pope received in Lyon, and records the speeches made by various dignitaries throughout the visit.¹² *Lettres d'un jeune Lyonnais* is a descriptive work in which Ballanche does not offer his personal views on theological, ecclesiastical, or political questions. The chief value of this work to the study of Ballanche is its demonstration that in 1805 Ballanche fervently supported the Papacy.¹³

On 4 ventôse, an XII (24 February 1804) Ampère, Bredin, and Ballanche founded a *Société chrétienne*. To the four other original members ten new associates were soon added. Meetings were held Friday afternoons at four-thirty at the house of each member in turn. The procès-verbal of 11 ventôse (2 March 1804) fixed eight questions as the basis of the *Société's* discussions. These eight questions may be reduced to three: for what reason was humanity created? is there a revelation? and what influence has Christianity exercised on the human race? In a sense, Ampère, Bredin, and Ballanche would devote their entire lives to these questions. Not all members of the *Société* were orthodox in their opinions, though their discussions were animated by a passionate desire for religious truth and a deep need for secure beliefs. The *Société* itself was short-lived; Ampère was its moving force and it disbanded soon after he moved to Paris in December 1804 when his budding reputation as a mathematician earned him a post at the Ecole Polytechnique.¹⁴ A smaller group that had formed within the *Société* survived its demise. Ampère, Ballanche, Bredin, and Roux-Bordier had taken to meeting together

¹² Ballanche, *Lettres d'un jeune Lyonnais à un de ses amis, sur le passage de Notre Saint-Père le Pape Pie VII à Lyon, le 19 novembre 1804, et sur son séjour dans le même ville, les 17, 18, et 19 avril 1805, à son retour de Paris* (Lyon: Ballanche, Père et Fils, an XIII-1805). Reprinted in *Les Papes à Lyon, II, Pie VII 1804-1805*, éd. Henri Hours (Lyon: Editions lyonnaises d'art et d'histoire, 1986).

¹³ On the resurgence of popular piety in Lyon at the time of Pius VII's visit and the role played in it by the young people of the city, see Hours' post-script to his edition of *Lettres*.

¹⁴ Joseph Buche, "Un conflit de conscience entre trois amis: Ampère, Ballanche, Bredin" in *Mémoires de l'Académie de Lyon* 3^e Série, 14 (1914): 89-90.

under the name *Petite Académie* or, alternatively, *Société psychologique*. The four friends discussed questions of religion and philosophy as they had in the larger group, but these private discussions dealt with problems of more intimate concern than they felt they could subject to public debate. After Ampère's departure the members of the *Petite Académie* continued to correspond and collaborate closely in their works for some years to come.¹⁵

Ballanche's reactions to André-Marie Ampère's volatile spiritual life allow us to establish the degree of Ballanche's orthodoxy at this time. In 1803, upon the death of his beloved wife, Ampère became a fervent Catholic and converted Bredin, who had hitherto been deeply Christian without bothering much over formal allegiances. Ballanche himself had never strayed from the pious Catholicism of his upbringing. When Ampère moved to Paris, however, he fell in with the *Société des Philosophes* and gradually renounced Catholicism in favour of a spiritualist philosophy strongly influenced by Maine de Biran. Ballanche and Bredin, appalled by their friend's drift away from the Church, deluged him with letters berating his pride and intellectual arrogance and imploring him to leave the corrosive atmosphere of Paris and return to Lyon, his true friends, and the true faith.¹⁶ Ballanche's anxiety over Ampère's spiritual health, together with his enthusiasm for the Pope, show that in the first decade of the nineteenth-century Ballanche was a sincere and pious Catholic of exemplary orthodoxy.

Ballanche's mother had died on 17 October 1803. His grief, together with his preoccupation with religious questions, the excitement of the papal visit, and the decision of several of the younger members of the *Société chrétienne* to take holy orders, induced in Ballanche thoughts of entering a seminary. Pierre-Simon wrote to Ampère in July 1805, telling him of his quandary and asking him for information about the life of seminarians:

Sachez donc quelle vie on mène au séminaire de Paris, quel en est à peu près le régime intérieure, non pas pour le boire et le manger, car cela m'est égal, je voudrais seulement savoir quelle somme d'exercices de piété on exige dans la journée, quelle somme de temps on a pour être seul avec soi-même, quelles sont les études qu'on y suit, à part la

¹⁵ Buche, *L'Ecole mystique de Lyon*, 85–86.

¹⁶ Ballanche to Ampère, July 1805, in Louis de Launay, éd., *Lettres Inédites de Claude-Julien Bredin à A. M. Ampère, au Pasteur August Touchon, et à Mme. Touchon* (Lyon: Rey, 1936), 11. See also numerous letters from the years 1803 to 1807 in Louis de Launay, éd., *Correspondance du grand Ampère*, 2 vols. (Paris: Gauthier-Villars, 1936).

théologie et la philosophie, etc.? Je voudrais savoir encore si on ne peut pas mêler à tout cela quelque étude étrangère, comme par exemple le grec et l'hébreu. Il me passe par la tête d'étudier les preuves de la religion dans les sources mêmes. Je ne puis le faire qu'en m'y livrant entièrement et exclusivement. Il faut donc que je quitte le monde et que j'embrasse l'état ecclésiastique. Croyez-moi, mon cher, je pourrais faire quelque bien dans cet état-là, et c'est une considération qui ne peut pas être indifférente.¹⁷

Ampère, by now in the midst of his anti-Catholic phase, was unequivocal in his rejection of the idea; whatever the solution to Ballanche's spiritual unrest might be, he was sure it was not subservience to dogma and authority.

In the end it was none other than Chateaubriand, who had become one of the most important authors published by "Ballanche, Père et Fils", who inadvertently contributed to shaking Ballanche out of his inward preoccupations. Pierre-Simon, in his capacity as publisher rather than as author of *Du Sentiment*, had met Chateaubriand in 1802 when the Ballanches negotiated the rights to a new edition of *Génie du christianisme*. Thus had begun a peculiar association of forty-five years between two men of very different temperaments.¹⁸ Relations between them were at first far from equal; Ballanche greatly admired Chateaubriand while the great man treated Ballanche with haughty condescension. Ballanche's correspondence with A. J. Q. Beuchot, the firm's agent in Paris, shows that in his business dealings with Chateaubriand Ballanche was the model of patient consideration, whereas Chateaubriand added greed and bad faith to his habitual condescension.¹⁹ Nevertheless, in 1804 "Ballanche, Père et Fils" proudly issued the fourth edition of *Génie de Christianisme*.²⁰ Although a proposed collaboration on a French edition of the Bible with a commentary by Chateaubriand came to nothing, relations between the two men continued and even warmed, as evidenced by the invitation Chateaubriand extended to Ballanche in the autumn of 1805 to accompany him and

¹⁷ A.-M. Ampère et J.-J. Ampère, *Correspondance et Souvenirs de 1805 à 1864*, recueillies par Madame H. C[heuvreux], 2 vols. (Paris: J. Hetzel, 1875), 1:20.

¹⁸ Joseph Joubert once said of Chateaubriand: "Il n'écrit que pour les autres et ne vit que pour lui". Quoted in André Maurois, *Chateaubriand* (Paris: Grasset, 1938), 462. The exact opposite could justly be said of Ballanche.

¹⁹ BN, MSS n.a.f. 5194-5197, *Lettres de Ballanche à Beuchot*, 4 vols. See also F. G. Vauthier, "Les premières relations entre Chateaubriand et Ballanche, d'après les papiers de Beuchot" in *Revue d'histoire littéraire de la France* 22 (1922): 268-287.

²⁰ Lyon: an XIII-1804. Reprinted twice in 1809, augmented by *Imitations en vers* and the *Défense de l'auteur*.

his wife on a trip to Geneva. Highlights for Ballanche included meeting Germaine de Staël, and sightseeing at the glaciers around Chamonix and the monastery of the Grande-Chartreuse near Grenoble. The next summer Chateaubriand, travelling toward the Near East and Nathalie de Noailles, was eager to dissuade his wife from accompanying him any farther than Italy. Recalling that she was fond of their publisher friend, he summoned Ballanche to Venice to escort a disgruntled Mme. de Chateaubriand back to Paris.

These whirlwind trips, together with his business duties back in Lyon, gave Ballanche little time to brood. He must also have realized that, as his letter to Ampère makes plain, it was a life of study he wanted, not a life of ecclesiastical duty. Henceforth, Ballanche combined study with his publishing chores, and we hear no more about his entering the Church. The first fruit of his new resolution was an account of his visit to the mother-house of the Carthusian Order. This work, a short piece entitled *La Grande Chartreuse*,²¹ combines description of the monastery and its environs with reflections induced by the damage to the monastery, still plainly evident at the time of his visit, wrought by the dechristianization campaign of the Revolution. Its theme of the destruction of a sacred site by impious men strongly recalls the *Epopée Lyonnaise*.

In these same months Ballanche's thoughts of taking holy orders were further dispelled by an affair of the heart. In 1806 the Ballanches employed an impoverished aristocrat from Montpellier named Etienne-Laurent-Jean Mazade d'Avèze to write a tourist column for the *Bulletin de Lyon*. Avèze was attempting to recoup his fortune by pushing a patent medicine based on angostura bark. Ballanche, never astute in business matters, took a financial interest in his columnist's angostura scheme and soon became more closely acquainted with its advocate. Avèze's daughter, Bertille-Honorine, then aged eighteen, came to Lyon to visit her father in the spring of 1806. One day she expressed a wish to make a pilgrimage to Mont Ceindre, the site of a hermitage near Lyon and a popular destination for outings. Her father, unwilling to make the strenuous climb himself, asked Ballanche to escort his daughter.²² In the course of the day Pierre-Simon fell in love

²¹ Excerpts from this work were included in *Fragments* (Paris: Renouard, 1819). The complete version was printed in *OC*, 1:18–33.

²² Bertille wrote an account of the outing, which the Ballanches published, with a preface and notes by Pierre-Simon, in a private edition. The work was republished anonymously ("par une jeune Languedocienne") in 1814 as *L'Ermilage du Mont-Cindre*,

with Mlle. Bertille. Ballanche proceeded cautiously, but by the next summer he had reached an agreement with her father whereby he would assume Mazade d'Avèze's debts in return for his daughter in marriage. Bertille herself, though having no say in the matter, does not seem to have been too unhappy at the prospective match. Her aunt, however, an aristocrat of the old order, was appalled. Mme. de Guilleminet, the aunt in question, was horror-struck at the thought of her niece marrying so far beneath her station. Ballanche spent three weeks in the summer of 1807 in Montpellier attempting to salvage the engagement. He was successful for a time, but Mme. de Guilleminet's renewed objections compelled him to return to the Midi for two months in the autumn of 1808. This time he failed. Since Avèze was counting on Guilleminet for a large dowry, he acquiesced in her refusal of Ballanche, even though the publisher had by then paid off most of his debts and acquired a large stock of the bark itself. The engagement was formally broken off in October 1808.²³ Ballanche shrugged off his financial losses, but the loss of his beloved Bertille plunged him into despair. Mlle. d'Avèze, for her part, eventually married Victor de Bonald, the younger son of the Catholic Traditionalist comte Louis de Bonald, and seems not to have given Ballanche any further thought. Ballanche, though, kept her memory alive in his heart, so that when in 1827 he learned of her death, two years after the event, he paid tribute to her in his "Ninth Fragment" (1830).²⁴

Ballanche's unease over the state of his engagement and his despair over its rupture received immediate literary expression in eight prose elegies that he published, anonymously, as "Fragments" in the *Bulletin de Lyon*.²⁵ Their theme is the impossibility of enduring happiness in this world of illusion and suffering: "J'ai reconnu que le bonheur était une plante étrangère, qui croît dans les champs du ciel, et qui ne peut s'acclimatiser sur le terre".²⁶ In discussing the literary merit

près Lyon ou Petit voyage par St-Rambert et St-Cyr (Paris: Michaud). It was twice reprinted under her married name of Bertille Mazade d'Avèze, vicomtesse de Bonald.

²³ Kettler, *Lettres de Ballanche à Madame Récamier*, 154–162. The apéritif Angostura is a direct descendant of Mazade d'Avèze's medicinal angostura bark, though neither he nor Ballanche ever profited from its success.

²⁴ *OC*, 1:378–385.

²⁵ 28 May 1808 to 25 October 1809. The eight "Fragments" were collected and published under Ballanche's name in *Fragments* (Paris: Renouard, 1819) and reprinted in *OC*, 1:337–377.

²⁶ *OC*, 1:337.

of the "Fragments" most commentators repeat Sainte-Beuve's observation that had Ballanche written the "Fragments" in verse instead of in prose he would have robbed Lamartine of the honour of having created the meditative elegy.²⁷ William R. Paulson has written an extremely suggestive article on the "Fragments" in which he discusses Ballanche's fascination with the fragmentary and argues, in opposition to Ballanche's own view, for the theoretical coherence of the "Fragments" with the rest of Ballanche's oeuvre.²⁸ Paulson's interpretation, which makes Ballanche's unhappy love affair the sole basis of his philosophy of *douleur*, greatly underestimates the importance of social and political considerations in the development of Ballanche's thought. Moreover, his view of life as suffering predates the Bertille episode, as *Épopée Lyonnaise* and *Du Sentiment* make clear.

On 12 January 1809 Ballanche read to the *Cercle littéraire* a short work entitled *Mort d'un philosophe platonicien, racontée par un de ses amis*.²⁹ The piece, which was to be the prologue to a larger work, *La Foi promise aux gentils*, recounts the prediction made by a dying philosopher, Timagenes, of the advent of a new faith and with it a new age on earth. *La Foi promise aux gentils* was to have told of the quest throughout the ancient world for this new faith by a young Greek named Polydore who had learned of Timagenes' prediction. Polydore's search was to have ended in Athens when he hears Saint Paul preach on the "unknown God" and recognizes in Christianity the promised faith. Though Ballanche worked on this epic, similar in inspiration and style to Chateaubriand's *Martyrs*,³⁰ on and off for years, it was never completed and *Mort d'un platonicien* is the only fragment of it extant. There is no mention of either expiation or progress in *Mort d'un platonicien*, though its presentation of Timagenes' death as a release from suffering accords with the view of life on earth expressed in Ballanche's other early writings. As Bénichou has observed, the apologetic content of the piece—that the expectation of Christ, known to the Jews by revelation, was dimly grasped by virtuous pagans—seems

²⁷ Sainte-Beuve, *Portraits contemporains*, 2:16.

²⁸ Paulson, "Fragment et Autobiographie dans l'Oeuvre de Ballanche: Etude et Textes Inédits" in *Nineteenth-Century French Studies* 15 (1986–1987): 15–32.

²⁹ Fraïnnet, *Essai sur la philosophie de P.-S. Ballanche*, 19–20. The *Cercle littéraire* was founded in April 1807 as a successor to *Amicitiae et litteris*. It became the *Société littéraire* in 1831. *Mort d'un platonicien* is reprinted in *OC*, 1:10–17.

³⁰ Paul Bénichou, "Le Grand oeuvre de Ballanche: Chronologie et inachèvement" in *Revue d'histoire littéraire de la France* 75 (1975): 736–737.

to owe more to the spirit of the times than to Ballanche's own pre-occupations and gives no indication of the originality of his future work.³¹

Ballanche soon returned to his familiar themes. "Fragments" had not exhausted his grief over Bertille d'Avèze; it flowed over into another, larger work, *Inès de Castro*. Ballanche read this novella to a receptive audience at the *Académie de Lyon* on 12 March 1811, although, no doubt mindful of the reception accorded *Du Sentiment*, he declined to have it published.³² Ballanche was drawn to the tragic tale of Inès and Don Pedro, which he knew from the then popular *Lusiads* of the Portuguese poet Luis de Camoëns, by its correspondences to his misfortunes with Mlle. d'Avèze. Ballanche's version is a loose adaptation in prose of Camoëns' story that emphasizes, as his Lyonnais auditors must surely have recognized, those points most clearly reminiscent of his own sorrows.³³

Ballanche composed the last of his early pieces, *Adieux à Rome*, in July 1813 during a brief visit to Rome (not to be confused with his residence there between December 1823 and May 1825).³⁴ The piece, a meditation on the city, opens with a comparison of life in this world to a traveller's voyage. Both are fleeting and both are long in pains and short in pleasures: "un voyage est une image triste, mais parfaite, de la vie".³⁵ Ballanche then marvels at the ruins of the classical city. He reflects on the suffering that went into the construction of these magnificent monuments, and on the universal human desire to perpetuate some memory of ourselves after death. Ballanche next turns away from these melancholy meditations to consider the monuments of the other Rome, the holy city of Saint Peter and Saint Paul. Now, it is not merely a question of evocative ruins, but rather of evidences of the early centuries of the living Christian religion. Even in its current eclipse (in 1813 Pope Pius VII was Bonaparte's prisoner at

³¹ Bénichou, "Le Grand oeuvre de Ballanche", 737.

³² Ballanche did consider issuing a private edition of *Inès de Castro* for his friends (see his letters to Beuchot, BN, MS n.a.f. 5196, feuillet 248 and MS 5197, feuillet 39). The manuscript of *Inès* had been lost by 1830 when Ballanche reprinted various early works in the *Oeuvres* (see his brief comment in *OC*, 1:6). It was later discovered among Ballanche's papers at Lyon and has been published with an introduction by Gaston Frainnet (Lyon: Storck, 1904).

³³ See Frainnet's "Introduction" to his edition of *Inès de Castro*.

³⁴ *Adieux à Rome* was included in *Fragments* (Paris: Renouard, 1819) and reprinted in *OC*, 1:34–37. Ballanche went to Rome to visit his new friend Juliette Récamier. Her immense importance to Ballanche will be discussed in Chapter Three.

³⁵ *OC*, 1:35.

Fontainebleau), Rome bears eloquent testimony to the true faith. Deeply moved, Ballanche declares that though it is easy to leave the city of Brutus and Caesar, he will never bid adieu to the capital of the Christian world. In 1813, Ballanche observed in a note appended to the 1830 reprinting of *Adieux à Rome*, "la vieille Rome ne m'avait point alors révélé ses mystères".³⁶ That is, the Rome of his later, unfinished *Formule générale*, the sacred city of plebeian initiation, had not yet commingled in Ballanche's thought with the Christian Rome of martyrs and popes. Paul Bénichou inexplicably interprets this passage as alluding to a shift in Ballanche's relation to the Church, from his early Traditionalist orthodoxy to the heterodoxy of his theory of palingenesis.³⁷ Ballanche's reference to Brutus and Caesar makes this reading exceedingly doubtful, and indeed the whole piece is built around the contrast between the pagan and Christian Romes. Though later works will overcome this dichotomy, *Adieux à Rome* itself looks back toward the themes of Ballanche's earlier works: the commemoration of the *Épopée Lyonnaise*, the ultramontanism of *Lettres d'un jeune Lyonnais*, and the view of life on earth as suffering of the "Fragments" and *Inès de Castro*.

Expiation and progress

Du Sentiment presents life as suffering and unhappiness as the lot of humanity. Unhappiness, however, is not a fortuitous evil; rather, it is necessary and even salutary: "Mais, oserai-je le dire, le malheur est nécessaire à l'homme; il est dans son élément: le repos est la mort de l'âme."³⁸ Unhappiness is vital to our spiritual well-being because too much good fortune corrodes our capacity for altruistic feelings:

Le trop de constance dans la bonne fortune détend les fibres, blase les sens, enorgueillit le regard, et forme autour du coeur cet *aes triplex* inaccessible aux douces impressions, ce bouclier de diamant, contre lequel viennent s'éteindre tous les traits de sympathie et d'amour. Le malheur retrempe l'âme et rend la sensibilité plus profonde et plus exquise; le malheur nous fait compatir aux maux des autres. . . . Les épreuves du malheur étendent leurs effets salutaires sur toute la vie; et

³⁶ *OC*, 1:37.

³⁷ Paul Bénichou, *Le Temps des prophètes: Doctrines de l'âge romantique* (Paris: Gallimard, 1977), 97.

³⁸ Ballanche, *Du Sentiment*, 131.

les tourmens de la douleur, conservés par le souvenir, impriment à l'âme un caractère qui ne s'efface jamais.³⁹

More importantly, suffering recalls to us the transitory nature of life on earth: “la terre que nous habitons est aussi un lieu d'exile”;⁴⁰ by triggering a *nostalgie céleste* for Heaven, our true *patrie*, suffering directs us to the proper end of life on earth. Ballanche's conception of the didactic function of suffering is a clear echo of the *Epopée Lyonnaise*, which predates his reading of *Du Sentiment* to the *Cercle littéraire* by only two years. Suffering, then, directs us toward salvation, but it does not save. Similarly, although suffering is a universal experience, salvation can be attained only within the true Church. Ballanche observes that all religions offer some consolation for the sufferings of life, usually through a doctrine of judgement and life after death. He concludes a brisk survey of various, mostly ancient, religions with the remark: “Au milieu de tant de superstitions absurdes, le dogme précieux des récompenses et des punitions après la mort était toujours demeuré comme un supplément à la faible conscience de l'homme”.⁴¹ Ballanche notes that this core of true dogma, to which false religions owe their influence, attests, despite the subsequent accretions of fictions and lies and the modifications effected by local conditions, to the divine origin of all religions.⁴²

The vestiges of divine origin discernible in the various religions of the world notwithstanding, Ballanche is adamant that there is only one true religion: Catholicism. It alone has been revealed in its entirety and it alone has neither lost nor added anything to its constitutive revelation.⁴³ Ballanche traces, in the manner of and indebted to Bossuet's *Discours sur l'histoire universelle* (1681), the effect of Catholicism on the peoples who adopt it. He then caps his defense of Catholicism as the truest and most beneficial religion by lauding the beauty and poetic power of Scripture, the doctrines of the eternal logos, the Trinity, the intercession of saints, and the Mysteries of the dual nature of Christ and the Eucharist.⁴⁴ Though Ballanche's point is that, *con-*

³⁹ *Du Sentiment*, 132–133.

⁴⁰ *Du Sentiment*, 112.

⁴¹ *Du Sentiment*, 160.

⁴² *Du Sentiment*, 161. The idea of the divine origin of all religions, which Ballanche does not pursue in this work, will become an important doctrine in *Palingénésie sociale*.

⁴³ *Du Sentiment*, 166–167. Ballanche uses “Christianity” and “Catholicism” interchangeably; he views Protestantism and Eastern Orthodoxy as deviations from pure Christianity.

⁴⁴ *Du Sentiment*, 168–179.

tra Boileau, Catholicism offers an inexhaustible treasury of themes and types to the artist—it is here that he speaks of “le génie du christianisme”—⁴⁵ his comments on Christ and the Eucharist permit an evaluation of his soteriology in 1801. The sins of humanity against God, Ballanche argues, were so great that unaided humanity could not atone for them. Humanity’s infinite guilt required an infinite victim, thus God in his mercy sent Christ the God-Man to redeem humanity from its sins by his death on the cross. Christ’s death as a “*sacrifice expiatoire*” is perpetuated in the sacrament of the Eucharist.⁴⁶ This is all Ballanche says on the subject of the Atonement and the Eucharist. It is difficult to judge the orthodoxy of his interpretation of the Eucharist since he does not define his position vis-à-vis the doctrine of the real presence. His view of Christ’s role in the redemption of humanity, however, is fully orthodox. Humanity is saved solely through the intervention of Christ and it is Christ’s dual nature that makes redemption possible.⁴⁷

When Ballanche refers to Christ’s death as an “expiatory sacrifice” he is using *expiation* as a synonym for “atonement”. The word refers exclusively to the death of Christ, and Christ’s death is the sole and sufficient expiation of human sin. The promise of immortality, and hence the false religions that teach it, may offer consolation for suffering, but only through the death of Christ, and the religion which proclaims it, is the promise of everlasting life attainable. There is one other use of expiation in *Du Sentiment*. It occurs in a passage in which Ballanche compares the novels of Samuel Richardson with those of Jean-Jacques Rousseau. Though he admires both writers, Ballanche declares himself for Rousseau, whom he defends as misunderstood and argues that even if Rousseau made errors, by his sufferings “il les a expiées”.⁴⁸ Expiation as used here refers simply to the sufferings of this life. It is a limited conception of expiation that operates within the closed circle of the life of an individual. Even

⁴⁵ *Du Sentiment*, 182.

⁴⁶ *Du Sentiment*, 178–179.

⁴⁷ Ballanche’s view that Christ’s death redeemed humanity from its debt to God is the Scholastic teaching on atonement, first articulated in Anselm’s *Cur Deus Homo*. Luther had rejected the satisfaction theory and taught that Christ, in bearing by voluntary substitution the punishment due man, was reckoned by God a sinner in man’s place; other Reformers worked out still further theories of atonement. Catholic orthodoxy of Ballanche’s day maintained the Scholastic interpretation.

⁴⁸ Ballanche, *Du Sentiment*, 222. Ballanche, like so many of his generation, offers himself as Rousseau’s ideal reader. For Ballanche and Richardson, see below.

less than the deaths of the Martyrs of Lyon, which stand as a memorial and example for future generations, do Rousseau's expiations extend beyond the private sphere. There is no link between Rousseau's expiation and that of Christ; Christ's role as sole and sufficient Saviour of the human race has not been transgressed.⁴⁹

Ballanche returns to the murderous destruction of the Lyon Terror in a long digression that explicitly refers to the unpublished *Epopée Lyonnaise*.⁵⁰ He mourns the sacrifice of the heroes of Lyon, praising them as the sole defenders of religion, virtue, and liberty in an enslaved France. Ballanche's diction reinforces the notion of sacrifice: Lyon is "*la cité magnanime*", the dead are "*généreux défenseurs*", "*généreuses victimes*", or simply "*Martyrs*", and the whole episode is a "*grand sacrifice*". In the note corresponding to this passage, Ballanche proposes the establishment of a monument and festival in honour of the memory of the "*généreuses victimes*".⁵¹ As in the *Epopée*, the emphasis is on commemoration: the Martyrs' example, reinforced by the monument and holiday, is to teach subsequent generations to love virtue and hate crime. No more than in the *Epopée* is there any suggestion that the deaths of the heroes of Lyon were expiatory deaths in the sense that they in any way effect the redemption of humanity. They died as witnesses to the true religion, the religion that teaches that Christ, and Christ alone, died to save humanity.

As a final note to the concept of expiation in *Du Sentiment*, it is appropriate to discuss the use of another word: *épreuve*. *Epreuve*, especially when used as a verb, can mean simply "experience"; it can also mean "trial", "test", or "ordeal", hence its affinity with initiation. The word occurs in the passage from *Du Sentiment* quoted in the first paragraph in this section, where it stands for the suffering entailed by life in this world. Though this use carries a sense of trial or ordeal inasmuch as we must endure suffering here and now in order to receive recompense in the next world, it is not an initiatory *épreuve* of the sort that Orpheus, for example, will later undergo, any more than the notion of expiation in *Du Sentiment* is that of *Orphée*.

⁴⁹ Mortier argues that Ballanche's originality vis-à-vis Bernardin de Saint-Pierre was to have placed *malheur* in the cosmic context of the Fall, expiation, and palingenesis in his "vision illuministe de l'histoire". "Le traité 'Du Sentiment'", 326. In fact, and as I have demonstrated, the Ballanche of *Du Sentiment* interpreted suffering in an intensely personal and fully orthodox manner; the doctrines of *Palingénésie sociale* must not be read back into *Du Sentiment*.

⁵⁰ Ballanche, *Du Sentiment*, 104–107.

⁵¹ *Du Sentiment*, 284–287.

The verb *expier* appears twice in *La Grande Chartreuse* (1805). First, when the sight of the monks' crude carvings of Old Testament figures bearing witness to the coming of the Saviour turns his thoughts to Christ, Ballanche remarks of Christ's mission that "Pour expier les folles joies et les vains orgueils du monde, [Christ] devait être abreuvé de douleurs et d'ignominies".⁵² As in *Du Sentiment*, expiation here expresses a fully orthodox interpretation of the Christ's atonement as taking the weight of human sin on himself. The second use of *expier* in *La Grande Chartreuse* pertains to a discussion of the character of the anchorites who had formerly inhabited the monastery. Ballanche reflects that while they had come to the monastery for various reasons, some "étaient venus expier les erreurs d'une jeunesse imprudente et orageuse".⁵³ In a manner reminiscent of Rousseau's expiations in *Du Sentiment*, this notion of expiation signifies the atonement made by the monks for the sins of their youth, though in this case expiation is achieved through obedience to Church discipline rather than by personal suffering. The final two paragraphs of *La Grande Chartreuse* depict the visitors afflicted by a "*malaise moral*", a melancholy recognition that this life is a life of exile in a world of suffering and sadness. Ballanche notes that not all the visitors (there are others present besides his party) understand this "*douleur intime*"; only "ceux qui avaient passé par les mêmes épreuves l'avaient compris".⁵⁴ The use of *épreuve* in *La Grande Chartreuse* as the sufferings that cause one to realize the true nature of this world as a place of exile from our spiritual *patrie* is entirely consistent with its use in *Du Sentiment*.

Ballanche twice speaks of expiation in the "Cinquième Fragment" of 1808. Here, after noting that suffering is the price we pay for the possession of an immortal soul, Ballanche remarks that it is the most virtuous who suffer most and for whom death often comes as a deliverance. He then reflects that Heaven seems to have marked these noble souls as "holocaustes d'expiation pour le reste des hommes". To illustrate his point, Ballanche cites Clarissa, the eponymous heroine of Samuel Richardson's novel. "Clarisse fit une seule faute, . . . Eh bien! voyez comme elle a expié cette faute unique".⁵⁵ Ballanche, interpreting

⁵² *OC*, 1:23.

⁵³ *OC*, 1:24.

⁵⁴ *OC*, 1:32.

⁵⁵ *OC*, 1:355. *Clarissa*, first published in England in 1748 and translated by the Abbé Prévost in 1751, was, like all of Richardson's novels, enormously popular in France. As late as 1828 a Paris bookseller's list of recommended authors for anyone

Richardson's novel as the story of Clarissa's expiation, draws from it the moral that all of us, even the most virtuous, are weak and feeble, and therefore we should be tolerant in our judgement of other people. The "Cinquième Fragment" is thus a sort of morality play set against a backdrop of the conception of life as suffering that is the dominant theme of the "Fragments" as a whole. Clarissa's expiation is at once illustrative of the moral and representative of this life of suffering. Clarissa's suffering helps others, but only in the sense that it recalls to them the true nature of life on earth. There is no suggestion that the expiation of noble souls in some way effects salvation for others; Clarissa, like the Martyrs of Lyon, is a witness, not a saviour.

The plot of *Inès de Castro* (1811) may be quickly summarized: Don Pedro, the son of King Alphonse IV of Portugal, falls in love with the beautiful Inès, and Inès with Pedro. Since Pedro, for reasons of state, is to marry a Castilian Infanta, he and Inès keep their love and eventual marriage secret. King Alphonse demands to know why Pedro refuses to marry the Spanish princess; Pedro is on the point of telling his father about his clandestine marriage when the news arrives that the Moors have invaded Portugal. Pedro receives command of the Portuguese armies and joyfully sets out for battle, hoping that military success will reconcile Alphonse to his love for Inès. Before victory is achieved, however, Alphonse learns of his son's marriage. Furious, he orders Inès executed, only to be overcome with remorse once she is dead. Pedro, unaware of Inès' death, gains a decisive victory over the Moors and returns home in triumph to learn the terrible news. Pedro swears to be faithful to Inès' memory and falls into despondency. Years later, having succeeded his father but still obsessed with cruel memories, Pedro crowns the skull of Inès as his regent and forces the nobles who had acquiesced in her death to kiss the skeletal hand of their Queen. *Inès de Castro* closes with Ballanche's

wishing to establish a successful *cabinet de lecture* began with Richardson. Alexandre Pigoreau, *Petite bibliographie biographico-romancière*, 3 vols. (Paris: Pigoreau, 1821–1828), 3:iv–v. Ballanche himself enthused over Richardson in *Du Sentiment*: "Richardson, quel nom te donnerai-je? Quel langue! quelles scènes! Hommes de boue, femmes dépravées . . . ne touchez pas les livres de Richardson, ils sont sacrés". And of Clarissa he exclaimed: "Rien de terrestre dans cette Clarisse; jamais elle n'est plus belle, plus pure, que lorsque son opprobre a été consommé; un lieu infame, elle en fait le sanctuaire de la vertu, et son ignominie devient son triomphe." *Du Sentiment*, 221. See also the discussion of Clarissa (along with Julie of Rousseau's *La Nouvelle Héloïse* and Virginie of Bernardin de Saint-Pierre's *Paul et Virginie*) as a model for Ballanche's early work in Kettler, *Lettres de Ballanche à Madame Récamier*, 226–233.

observation that at this act, itself a blend of sublimity and madness, the assembled crowd “frémit de terreur et pitié, car, en ce jour, on avait vu à découvert le tableau de toutes les misères humaines”.⁵⁶

Inès de Castro, while uncharacteristically gruesome for Ballanche,⁵⁷ belongs to the same world-view as the “Fragments” in its depiction of the misery of human existence in this world and its identification of suffering as the inevitable concomitant of love. Ballanche speaks of expiation in a passage in which Inès, having learned she is about to die, reflects on the nature of human existence: “Je vais mourir, disait-elle; mais qu’est-ce que mourir? Qu’est-ce que vivre? Oh! je savais bien que le bonheur n’habite pas sur la terre; il faut que j’expie celui que j’ai goûté”.⁵⁸ Inès, surely one of those noble souls, like Clarissa, for whom heaven has decreed an extra measure of suffering, here rehearses Ballanche’s by now familiar notion of expiation: life is suffering, love is an especially acute form of suffering, death is the sole reprieve from suffering, and all this misery is the necessary prelude to salvation.

The word *progrès* appears only twice in *Du Sentiment*, and in neither instance is Ballanche advocating a doctrine of progress in the manner of Enlightenment writers. The first use of the word occurs in a discussion of the relative merits of ancient and modern literature. In this late echo of the Quarrel of the Ancients and Moderns, Ballanche sides with the Moderns, arguing that: “Nos progrès dans la métaphysique nous ont conduits sans doute à la découverte de cette faculté, que nous avons appelée, *sentiment*”.⁵⁹ It is, to Ballanche’s mind, precisely the discovery of the faculty of *sentiment* that gives Moderns their advantage over the Ancients. That this conception of progress, however, is a limited one is demonstrated by Ballanche’s second use of *progrès*. In a passage identifying the French Revolution as divine punishment, Ballanche describes the glittering but impious society of the Enlightenment: “le peuple le plus polis et le plus raisonneur de l’univers, couvert des vêtements du luxe et des lambeaux de la misère, fier de ses progrès dans les science et les arts. . . .”⁶⁰ Ballanche here explicitly

⁵⁶ Ballanche, *Inès de Castro*, éd. Frainnet, 88.

⁵⁷ The French public, however, seems to have enjoyed this tale. The death and posthumous coronation of Inès, alone of Camoëns’ stories, was made the subject of numerous works in the early years of French Romanticism. See Albert J. George *The Development of French Romanticism* (Syracuse: Syracuse UP, 1955), 28–29.

⁵⁸ Ballanche, *Inès de Castro*, éd. Frainnet, 73.

⁵⁹ Ballanche, *Du Sentiment*, 17.

⁶⁰ Ballanche, *Du Sentiment*, 58–59.

associates progress, in the sense given it by the Enlightenment, with the impious rationalism that he holds responsible for the calamity of the Revolution. In 1801, we may conclude, Ballanche accepted a limited conception of progress in specific areas, while rejecting outright the eighteenth-century apotheosis of the idea of progress.

The concept of progress does not appear in *La Grande Chartreuse*. However, a discussion that Ballanche records in detail, and which in fact forms the bulk of the piece, treats the fashionable topic of the harmony between science and religion. Two geologists argue that the discoveries of science are reconcilable with Scripture while a priest applauds their view. Consensus is broken, however, by a “young man”, clearly Ballanche himself, who insists that science is useless, even inimical, to religion because it belongs to the illusions of terrestrial life. Since our sole concern, he maintains, should be with salvation, science, like all things of this life, is at best superfluous and at worst detrimental inasmuch as it distracts our attention from the next world. Ballanche’s point is that life on earth is meaningless in itself. The only change of any importance is salvation; that is, departing this world of illusion and falsehood for the immutability of the spiritual realm. Not only does *La Grande Chartreuse* not develop a notion of progress, it is actively hostile to any such notion since change, progress as much as retrogression, is an attribute of the sub-lunary world of illusion, falsehood, and suffering. The other Lyon works present a similar picture: there is no place for any conception of progress in a world in which, in the words of the “Deuxième Fragment”, “la douleur seule compte dans la vie, et il n’y a de réel que les larmes”.⁶¹

Ballanche’s works written between 1797 and 1813 collectively comprise a meditation on the meaning of the suffering that inescapably accompanies this life. The meditation is intensely personal; when Ballanche speaks of suffering he is thinking of the suffering he himself has experienced: the Lyon Terror, the physical pain of the operations he endured, and the emotional pain of his broken engagement to Bertille d’Avèze. Ballanche gives meaning to his suffering by locating it within the teachings and promises of the Catholic Church. His occasional references to expiation remain well within the bounds of orthodox Christian belief, and he has not yet elaborated a doctrine of progress.

⁶¹ *OC*, 1:343.

Revolution

Given the centrality of the French Revolution to the development of Ballanche's philosophy of history, it is worthwhile to gather together the scattered references to the Revolution in *Du Sentiment* in order to see how the Ballanche of 1797/1801 interpreted it. Just as in *Epopée Lyonnaise* Ballanche bewailed the "*doctrines pernicieuses*" of the philosophes, so in *Du Sentiment* he places responsibility for the tragedy of the Revolution squarely on reason; that is, Enlightenment rationalism.⁶² After arguing that *sentiment*, not reason, is the source of great art and morality, Ballanche points out that *sentiment* also safeguards the foundations of religion and society by protecting them from the corrosive effects of reason. Society, like religion, is a divinely founded institution. Impious rationalism, by expelling the supernatural from human affairs, attacks the very bases of religion and society. Historically, once the philosophes had undermined traditional religion and paternal society, France inevitably collapsed into the idolatry and anarchy of the Revolution.⁶³

The principal target of these arguments is Rousseau's *Du Contrat social*. Nevertheless, Ballanche's attitude toward Rousseau is deeply ambiguous. Like so many of his generation, he is steeped in *Emile* and *La Nouvelle Héloïse* and clearly admires Rousseau in many respects. Yet, Rousseau's social theorizing contradicts Ballanche's fundamental belief in the divine origin of society. Relatedly, he condemns Rousseau's praise of solitude as immoral; for Ballanche, "L'homme est né pour la société; ce n'est que dans la société qu'il peut développer toutes ses facultés et déployer toutes les ressources de son intelligence".⁶⁴ Ballanche considers Rousseau's combination of social contract and individualism extremely dangerous, and it is on his shoulders that he lays most of the blame for the Revolution. Ballanche often returns to Rousseau in later works, and always with the same ambivalence best summed up in a line from *Du Sentiment*: "Le sentiment, dis-je, illumina J. J. Rousseau, et J. J. Rousseau employa toutes les forces de son génie à combattre le sentiment".⁶⁵

⁶² This is not to say that Ballanche rejected the Enlightenment in toto. Mortier remarks on the strong classical aspect of *Du Sentiment*. "Le traité 'Du Sentiment'", 323–324.

⁶³ Ballanche, *Du Sentiment*, 56–57. For *sentiment* over reason in general, see 44–60.

⁶⁴ Ballanche, *Du Sentiment*, 141.

⁶⁵ Ballanche, *Du Sentiment*, 57–58. A similar ambiguity over Rousseau may be

Ballanche adds another element to his interpretation of the Revolution when he elaborates on the divine nature of political and social institutions. All societies, he states, have been established and organized in accordance with the providential order. Any interference by humanity in the structure of society may upset this providential order. For this reason, the basic principles that govern societies ought to be a holy mystery so that a sense of religious awe may protect them from profane examination. Because constitutions ought never become fodder for public discussion, Ballanche argues that they should not be written down, nor, worst of all, printed. Unfortunately, this is precisely what happened in France. The political theorizing of the Enlightenment culminated in a new anti-providential conception of society. Providence tolerated this impiety for a while, then exacted a terrible retribution in the anarchy and terror of the Revolution.⁶⁶

Ballanche now interprets the Revolution not simply as the almost mechanistic consequence of human interference in the laws governing society, but as a divine chastisement. This view of the Revolution as the punishment for France's impiety echoes the standard interpretation of it among Catholic Traditionalists. The classic expression of this position is Joseph de Maistre's *Considérations sur la France* (1796).⁶⁷ Ballanche admired Maistre's work immensely. He reproduces in the notes to his own discussion Maistre's opening paragraphs on the divine origin and nature of social institutions.⁶⁸ Ballanche refers the reader to *Considérations* a second time in regard to his discussion of the inability of unaided human reason to construct satisfactory constitutions. Though Ballanche does not indicate that he is quoting Maistre, a comparison of two passages demonstrates how closely he follows Maistre's text:

L'homme peut tout modifier dans la sphère de son activité, mais il ne crée rien: telle est sa loi, au physique comme au moral.

found in Bonald. See Auguste Viatte, *Le Catholicisme chez les Romantiques* (Paris: Boccard, 1922), 13–14.

⁶⁶ Ballanche, *Du Sentiment*, 141–146.

⁶⁷ This is not to overlook differences among the Traditionalists in their views of the Revolution. Bonald, for example, saw only a reign of demons where Maistre saw the hand of providence. Viatte, *Le Catholicisme chez les Romantiques*, 68–69.

⁶⁸ Ballanche, *Du Sentiment*, 303. Ballanche cites *Considérations* by title only because the work was published anonymously and at this early date Ballanche does not seem to have known its author's name. It would be interesting to know how Ballanche acquired his copy of *Considérations* since only a limited number of copies had been smuggled into France and most of the work's readers were émigrés.

L'homme peut sans doute planter un pépin, élever un arbre, le perfectionner par la greffe, et le tailler en cent manières; mais jamais il ne s'est figuré qu'il avait le pouvoir de faire un arbre.

Comment s'est-il imaginé qu'il avait celui de faire une constitution?⁶⁹

Que des politiques audacieux ne croient pas qu'il soit en leur pouvoir de classer à leur gré l'espace humaine, et de ranger les empires comme les compartimens d'un jardin. Qu'ils ne croient pas qu'il soit en leur pouvoir de dire: Ici j'établirai une république; là, une monarchie; et là, un gouvernement despotique. Dieu n'a pas voulu que des choses d'une si haute importance fussent soumises aux calculs indiscrets de notre raison: il a voulu que les erreurs de cette raison ne pussent s'exercer que dans un espace très-circonscrit, et qu'au-delà fut l'empire immuable de la Providence.⁷⁰

Ballanche retains even the botanic metaphor in his appropriation of Maistre's ideas on the respective roles of God and humanity in the creation of political and social institutions. We may conclude that in 1801 Ballanche's interpretation of the Revolution as a divine punishment for the impiety of the eighteenth century allied him with the reactionary views of the Catholic Traditionalists.⁷¹

⁶⁹ Maistre, *Considérations* in *Oeuvres complètes*, 14 vols. (Lyon: Vitte: 1884–1893), 1:67.

⁷⁰ Ballanche, *Du Sentiment*, 141–142.

⁷¹ I shall return to the complicated relationship of Ballanche to Maistre below. See also Jean-René Derré, "Ballanche Continuateur et Contradicteur de J. de Maistre" in *Revue des Etudes Maistriennes*, 5–6 (Paris: Belles-Lettres, 1980): 297–316. Reprinted in Derré, *Littérature et Politique dans l'Europe du XIX^e siècle* (Lyon: Presses Universitaires de Lyon, 1986), 191–212. Derré does not discuss *Du Sentiment*.

CHAPTER THREE

ANTIGONE

About the time Ballanche finished writing *Inès de Castro* he conceived the idea of a national epic centred on another tragic heroine, Jeanne d'Arc. For reasons that he never clearly explained, however, Ballanche put aside the idea of a *Jeanne d'Arc* in favour of a work devoted to the story of yet another unfortunate maid, Antigone of Thebes.¹ By 9 July 1812 Ballanche had progressed sufficiently on this new work so as to be able to read the beginning of Book I to a session of the *Société littéraire de Lyon*. He completed the final scene of *Antigone* in the summer of 1813 while travelling to Rome to visit Juliette Récamier.² I have had occasion to mention Récamier in relation to *Adieux à Rome* (which dates from this same trip). Though Récamier herself was incidental to *Adieux*, she played a crucial role in the composition of *Antigone*. It is therefore appropriate to cast a glance at the life of this remarkable woman.

As a very young woman, Juliette Récamier had been one of the reigning beauties of Parisian society under the Directory and the Consulate. During the Empire, however, her friendship with opponents of Bonaparte, particularly Germaine de Staël, and her refusal to temper the outspokenness of certain members of her salon on political matters aroused Bonaparte's anger. On 30 August 1811 Bonaparte declared her an enemy of the Empire and proscribed her presence within one hundred miles of Paris. After eight lonely months at

¹ See Ballanche's brief discussion of his shifting intentions in *OC*, 1:6–8.

² From hereon in I restrict my comments to those aspects of Ballanche's works relevant to the themes of this study since general descriptions of these works are readily available. See Gaston Frainnet, *Essai sur la philosophie de P.-S. Ballanche* (Paris: Picard, 1903) and Albert Joseph George, *Pierre-Simon Ballanche: Precursor of Romanticism* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1945). Still one of the best résumés of Ballanche's works and central ideas is Auguste Barchou de Penhoën, "Essai d'une Formule générale de l'histoire de l'humanité, d'après les idées de M. Ballanche" in *Revue des Deux Mondes* Série 1, t. 1–2 (1831): 526–560. For *Antigone* in particular, see Léon Cellier, *L'Épopée romantique* (Paris: PUF, 1954), 84–88; Raymond Trousson, "L'*Antigone* de Pierre-Simon Ballanche" in *Synthèses* 15 (1960): 96–104; and Simone Fraisse, "Le thème d'Antigone dans la pensée française au XIX^e et au XX^e siècles" in *Bulletin de l'Association Guillaume Budé* 25 (1966): 250–288.

Châlons-sur-Marne, Récamier decided to visit her native Lyon. Settling in at the hôtel de l'Europe on what she remembered as the rue Bellecour, but which had been renamed rue Bonaparte, she began to receive old friends, among them Camille Jordan. Jordan spoke warmly of his shy friend Ballanche and, after having made her read Ballanche's "Fragments" and recounted the story of his despair over Bertille d'Avèze, requested permission to introduce his friend.

"Lorsqu'il vit pour la première fois Mme. Récamier", Ballanche recorded of himself in an unfinished, unpublished biography of Récamier:

il fut tout de suite enveloppé d'un charme inconnu; . . . Il avait lui-même, en ce moment, d'amers chagrins qui s'évanouirent comme par enchantement et c'est ainsi que commença une amitié vive et colorée qui sera, par la suite, une sorte d'inspiration pour tous ses ouvrages.³

By the end of the day, Récamier's niece and adopted daughter confirmed, "son âme et sa vie furent enchaînée; dès ce moment M. Ballanche appartient à Mme. Récamier".⁴ The next day the smitten Ballanche returned alone to the hôtel de l'Europe. His stuttering and awkwardness with small-talk caused the conversation to languish at first, but Récamier soon put aside her embroidery needle as the conversation turned toward philosophy and literature, subjects on which Ballanche spoke fluently and captivantly. Juliette was intrigued by this awkward, idiosyncratic, possibly brilliant publisher.⁵ She gave him permission to call on her as often as he liked and defended his *gaucheries* against the mockery of her urbane coterie.⁶

The friendship blossomed; before long Ballanche was spending most of his evenings with Récamier. His bliss was soon cut short, however, as in March 1813, after only a few months in Lyon, she departed on a lengthy visit to Italy. Pierre-Simon missed his new friend deeply: "Tous les soirs je consacrerai quelques instants à *Antigone* . . . ce sera

³ Quoted in Edouard Herriot, *Madame Récamier et ses amis*, 2 vols. (Paris: Plon-Nourrit, 1909), 1:291-292.

⁴ Amélie-Cyvoct Lenormant, *Souvenirs et correspondances tirés des papiers de Madame Récamier*, 2 vols. (Paris: Lévy, 1860), 1:199. Cf. Sainte-Beuve's observation of Récamier: "Elle écoutait avec séduction". *Causeries du Lundi*, 15 vols. (Paris: Garnier, 3^e édition 1850), 1:137.

⁵ Lenormant, *Souvenirs et correspondances*, 1:200.

⁶ Cf. Victor Hugo's rhyme of a later date: "L'Ours, parce qu'il est noir et parce qu'elle est blanche/Se prend d'un sombre amour pour la neige, et Ballanche/Adore, vieux et laid, Madame Récamier". *Notes avant l'exil*, quoted in Agnès Kettler, *Lettres de Ballanche à Madame Récamier, 1812-1845* (Paris: Champion: 1996), 287.

un moyen de me distraire du souvenir des soirées que j'avais coutume de passer auprès de vous, sans me distraire de vous-même, chose à laquelle je tiens par-dessus tout, et qui serait au reste impossible".⁷ Ballanche's sadness turned to joy when Récamier invited him to visit her in the house in Rome that the sculptor Antonio Canova had placed at her disposal. Ballanche gratefully accepted the invitation, setting out for Rome in May of 1813. While travelling, he put the finishing touches on *Antigone*, and in Rome read the concluding funeral scene from Book VI to Juliette's Roman salon.

Ballanche recorded in the fragment of his biography of Récamier cited above that when he first met her he lacked confidence in his abilities as a writer. Récamier's encouragement, however, convinced him that with *Antigone* he had achieved something of merit and, for the first time since *Du Sentiment*, decided to publish. Even so, the memory of the reception accorded *Du Sentiment* made Ballanche wary. His original plan had been to publish privately an *Antigone* (consisting of four books) along with *Inès de Castro* and the "Fragments" in a volume intended for friends only. The fall of Bonaparte in 1814 convinced him to consent to a general distribution of *Antigone* (now in five books) but stripped of the earlier works. Finally, the definitive six-book edition of *Antigone* was published in August 1814.⁸ Just as the Concordat of 1801 had encouraged him to believe that society would welcome *Du Sentiment*, so the return of the Bourbons convinced him that the time was ripe for his *Antigone*. This time, Ballanche's judgement was correct. Among the first reviews were a warm notice, anonymous, in *Le Constitutionnel* (2 February 1816) and a series of articles, predominantly favourable, by Charles Nodier in the *Journal des Débats*, the locus of Ballanche's earlier humiliation.⁹ Though these reviews were balanced by less laudatory ones, and its overall critical reception was never more than lukewarm, *Antigone* achieved something of a popular success; for the first time Ballanche's name became known beyond Lyon.

The popularity of *Antigone* was above all the result of its association

⁷ Ballanche to Récamier, 17 March 1813, in Kettler, *Lettres de Ballanche à Madame Récamier*, 332.

⁸ See Kettler, *Lettres de Ballanche à Madame Récamier*, 98–100.

⁹ Nodier's articles were reprinted in his *Mélanges de littérature et de critique*, 2 vols. (Paris: Raymond, 1820). Ballanche responded to many of the criticisms made in these articles in his preface to the *Oeuvres* edition of *Antigone*. OC, 1:41–48. Frainnet discusses the critical reception of *Antigone* in *Essai sur la philosophie de P.-S. Ballanche*, 52.

with the duchesse d'Angoulême, the eldest daughter of Louis XVI, at a time when, amid the celebration of the First Restoration, any work dealing with kings or the families of kings was guaranteed an enthusiastic reception by a large portion of the literate population. Moreover, there were distinct resemblances between Antigone and the duchesse d'Angoulême: both were pious orphan princesses who had suffered for their families and their homelands. Popular sentiment immediately declared Ballanche's *Antigone* to be a cipher of the sufferings of this daughter of Louis XVI.¹⁰ Although in the "Epilogue" to *Antigone* Ballanche denied that he intended the work as an allegory of current events, he did acknowledge similarities between the life of the Theban princess and that of the "*Antigone française*".¹¹ Further, having presented a copy of *Antigone* (in five books) to the duchesse during her passage through Lyon in August 1814, he obtained permission to dedicate the definitive edition to "Son Altesse Royale Madame, Duchesse d'Angoulême" in an address that began:

Antigone fut, dans les temps anciens, le plus parfait modèle d'une vie de dévouement et de sacrifice: son nom est devenu le nom même de la piété filiale; il est devenu le nôtre, MADAME, et c'est là, sans doute, la plus grande louange que l'on ait pu jamais donner à cette héroïne de la vertu et du malheur.¹²

Ballanche was perfectly aware of the probable association of his heroine with the duchess d'Angoulême. In May 1814, when he first decided to publish *Antigone*, he told Beuchot that "Quoique mon *Antigone* ne soit point un ouvrage de circonstance, cependant à cause de *l'Antigone française*, il pourra jouir de quelque faveur".¹³ Indeed, Ballanche's name was henceforth indissolubly associated with royalist literature in the minds of many of his contemporaries.

Expiation

As in the case of *Inès de Castro*, Ballanche had originally been drawn to the story of the tragic love of Antigone and Haemon in the face

¹⁰ Sainte-Beuve, *Portraits contemporains*, 5 vols. (Paris: Lévy, 1869–1871), 2:20.

¹¹ *OC*, 1:330–331.

¹² Ballanche, *Antigone* (Paris: Didot, 1814), 7. The dedication appears in the 1819 and 1829 editions of *Antigone*, but was deleted from the 1839 and 1841 editions and the *Oeuvres* of 1830 and 1833.

¹³ Ballanche to Beuchot, 24 May 1814, in BN, n.a.f. MS 5197, feuillet 133.

of family quarrels because of its resonance with his own unhappy experience. Ballanche's familiar theme of the inexorability of suffering suffuses the work: "le cœur de l'homme ne sait que souffrir", affirms the wise Amphiaräus. Earlier, Oedipus declared: "Il n'est rien dans la vie de réel que les larmes".¹⁴ While it is true that the latter passage occurs in Oedipus' tirade against hope, which is counter-balanced by Antigone's trust in the future, Oedipus is proved wrong only as regards divine forgiveness, not the woeful condition of humanity. Further, that Oedipus' words reflect Ballanche's own view may be seen, aside from Amphiaräus' affirmation, by their almost exact reiteration of the final phrase of Ballanche's "Deuxième Fragment": "La douleur seul compte dans la vie, et il n'y a de réel que les larmes".¹⁵

The suspicion that *Antigone* belongs to the same emotional world as the "Fragments" is confirmed by Ballanche's choice of motto: *Sunt lacrimae rerum et mentum mortalia tangunt* (Virgil, *Aeneid*, Bk. I, line 462). Virgil's full phrase reads: "sunt hic etiam sua praemia laudi, sunt lacrimae rerum et mentum mortalia tangunt", which a modern scholar translates as: "for even here honour has its due reward,/and even here tears fall for men's lot and mortality touches the soul". Since the force of *hic etiam* carries over to the second line, Virgil's sense is that *even here* in Carthage, on what Aeneas had thought to be a barbaric shore, the humane emotions of honour and sorrow are understood and respected.¹⁶ Ballanche's omission of the first clause of Virgil's phrase, which contains the limiting *hic etiam*, transforms the sense of the tag from a particular observation about the Carthaginians into a general statement about the misery of life on earth. Ballanche's translation of his motto (which appears only in the "Préface" added to *Oeuvres* edition of 1830) confirms his universalizing reading of it: "Il est des choses qui semblent contenir elles-mêmes des larmes, et les peintures de la condition mortelle peuvent seules toucher notre âme".¹⁷

Antigone, then, takes up the theme of this world as a vale of tears familiar to us from Ballanche's earlier works. Nevertheless, it is a much more hopeful work than the "Fragments" or *Inès de Castro*.

¹⁴ *OC*, 1:159, 110.

¹⁵ *OC*, 1:343.

¹⁶ Virgil, *Aeneidos, Liber Primus*, with a commentary by R. G. Austin (Oxford: Clarendon, 1971), 150, 156.

¹⁷ *OC*, 1:42. This same line from Virgil serves as the motto for one of the most popular literary works of the eighteenth century, one whose theme closely approximates Ballanche's: Edward Young's *Night Thoughts* (1742).

Ballanche's Antigone is a heroine in whom suffering is bonded to healing power; whereas Inès' misery was impotent to affect life on earth and received recompense only in heaven, Antigone's suffering effects, as we shall see, the reconciliation of her family and city. We need not look far for the cause of Ballanche's new attitude. Juliette Récamier banished all thoughts of Bertille d'Avèze from his mind ("bitter sorrows vanished as if by enchantment") and Ballanche set to work transforming his Antigone from a weepy, passive neo-Inès into a strong, active figure directly modelled on his new friend: "je tâcherai de la faire un peu semblable à vous".¹⁸ A few years later Ballanche elaborated on this resemblance:

Vous rappelez-vous Antigone? . . . [C]ette destinée à part, cette âme élevée, ce coeur généreux, ce génie du dévouement sont des traits de votre caractère. Vous auriez aussi inspiré l'hymne à la beauté qu'Antigone chantait parmi ses jeunes compagnes. Je commençais seulement à travailler à *Antigone* lorsque vous m'êtes apparue à Lyon; et Dieu seul sait pour combien vous êtes dans la peinture de cet admirable personnage. L'antiquité est bien loin de m'en avoir fourni toutes les données. Cet idéal m'a été révélé par vous; et tout mon mérite consiste à avoir bien vite su vous connaître et vous apprécier.¹⁹

The nature of this resemblance is explained in Agnès Kettler's excellent analysis of the relationship between Ballanche and Juliette Récamier. When they first met they recognized in each other a deep-seated unhappiness. Ballanche, who had advertised his unhappiness in the "Fragments" that Camille Jordan had made her read, immediately perceived a kindred unhappiness behind the glamour of the famous beauty. Moreover, Ballanche could explain and justify their unhappiness in a manner highly flattering to them both. The incapacity for happiness, he argued, is a sign of the awareness of a fallen creature of its divine origin and its nostalgia for its true celestial home. Récamier's beauty, according to this platonist account, is similarly a reflection of her moral perfection. Thus there is no contradiction between her beauty and her sadness; they arise from the same source. The vulgar respond to her beauty with physical desire, which is the only expression of eros they possess. But for Ballanche, in whom it awakens the memory of ideal beauty, it is a revelation of the divine

¹⁸ Ballanche to Récamier, 17 March 1813, in Kettler, *Lettres de Ballanche à Madame Récamier*, 332.

¹⁹ Ballanche to Récamier, 13 February 1819, in Kettler, *Lettres de Ballanche à Madame Récamier*, 436–437.

order and the celestial destiny of humanity. Ballanche thereby radicalized the contemporary cliché by which contemporaries addressed Juliette Récamier as “mon ange”; she truly is a messenger from the divine order. Ballanche was able to assure his new friend that she was not an inaccessible coquette; those who held this opinion (and there were many) merely displayed their own vulgar nature. In truth, her role was to inspire those worthy of rising with her to the higher reaches of the platonic ladder of the loves. It is this platonic conception of Juliette’s beauty and inspiration that Ballanche endeavoured to express in *Antigone*.²⁰

The new status accorded suffering in *Antigone* is reflected in an elaboration of the notion of expiation. The word expiation and its cognates appear numerous times in *Antigone*. Upon close examination, distinct shades of meaning may be discerned in their use. I shall examine each set of meanings, beginning with the use consonant with the sense accorded expiation in Ballanche’s previous works.

In Book II, exiled from Thebes and repenting of his crimes, Oedipus decides to go to Mount Cythaeron, where years before he had slain Laius, in order to perform a “sacrifice expiatoire aux mânes de mon père”.²¹ Book III opens with the arrival of Antigone in Athens, where she discovers the court of King Theseus in mourning. Tiresias, the narrator, notes that Theseus “expiait . . . le crime d’avoir abandonné Ariane dans l’île de Naxos et celui d’avoir cru le témoignage de son incestueuse épouse”.²² While in Athens, Antigone meets her brother, Eteocles, whom she begs to repent of his crimes so that worse crimes (war, fratricide) may be avoided: “O mon frère! n’attends pas le dernier moment pour expier tes fautes. . . .”²³ Finally, in Book V, Tiresias, reflecting on the crimes of both Eteocles and Polynices, compares their lot to the horrible death of a monstrous serpent that terrorized the country-side until it was bound to a pyre by a magician’s spell, “où il expie, au sein des tortures, une vie odieuse. Tels sont les hommes coupables entre les mains de la justice divine”.²⁴ In each of these instances, expiation means the atonement through suffering made (or

²⁰ Kettler, *Lettres de Ballanche à Mme Récamier*, 33–34, 210–214, 289–290.

²¹ *OC*, 1:101.

²² *OC*, 1:133. According to the Greek myth, Theseus, after slaying the Minotaur with Ariadne’s help, leaves her asleep at Naxos and returns to Athens without her. Later, when Theseus’ son Hippolytus repulses his step-mother Phaedra’s advances, she tricks Theseus into delivering him to his death.

²³ *OC*, 1:140.

²⁴ *OC*, 1:261.

to be made) by an individual for a transgression against the moral order. Such expiation can be voluntary, as was Oedipus' sacrifice and Antigone's plea to Eteocles, or it can be imposed, as on Theseus and the serpent (and by extension Eteocles and Polynices). In both cases, expiation adheres to its traditional Christian significance of atonement made for sin, and remains completely subordinate to divine justice. Ballanche had used voluntary expiation in this sense in *Epopée Lyonnaise* and *La Grande Chartreuse* and imposed expiation in *Inès de Castro*.

A second meaning of expiation in *Antigone* refers to duties performed by others for the dead. At the conclusion of Book IV, after Daphne, Tiresias' daughter, has sung Queen Jocasta's funeral hymn for King Priam's court, one of the Trojan women requests more details concerning the "cérémonies de l'expiation au tombeau de Jocaste".²⁵ In response, Daphne describes the various rituals performed by Antigone at her mother's tomb. A similar scene takes place in Book VI when Antigone, flouting Creon's edict, performs burial rites for Polynices. This, of course, is the pivotal event of the story, but what concerns us here is Ballanche's account of Antigone's motivation. After describing the rituals performed, Ballanche concludes: "Maintenant elle est satisfaite; le cérémonie expiatoire est accomplie, les mânes plaintifs de son frère sont apaisés".²⁶ Here, the function of expiatory rites, as the latter example makes clear, is the establishment of correct relations with departed spirits. Though in both instances the rituals are performed by Antigone, her acts are in no way particular to the house of Laius. They are simply the duties incumbent on any family at the death of one of its members. Antigone acts solely in her capacity as daughter and sister; though she may be exemplary, her acts do not raise her above ordinary filial obligation. This meaning of expiation is similar to the first one inasmuch as it signifies an obligation that must be fulfilled. Here, however, instead of atonement for a crime one has committed, expiation signifies a duty owed to the spirits of the dead. Failure to fulfil this duty constitutes an impiety, a crime against the gods. Properly fulfilled, however, there is no crime involved; that is, burial rites are not expiations-by-proxy of the crimes of the dead. This sense of expiation seems to have been borrowed from the funerary rituals of Greek paganism and belongs to the milieu of the myth rather than to anything imported

²⁵ OC, 1:203.

²⁶ OC, 1:295.

into the story by Ballanche. It remains firmly subordinate to the theme of piety,²⁷ and cannot be said to represent a development of Ballanche's own conception of expiation.

The first indication of an extension of the concept of expiation occurs in the episode of Book V in which Creon's son, Menoeceus, recalling an ancient prophecy that Thebes would be saved from great misfortune by the voluntary sacrifice of a noble Theban, wanders unarmed among the attacking army in order to give up his life for his country. Menoeceus' self-sacrifice, however, is rejected: "C'est un illustre Thébain [said the attackers among themselves], qui se dévoue pour sa patrie: refusons-lui la mort. Epargnons la victime expiatoire de Thèbes! que le mal demeure sur l'héritage malheureux d'Oedipe"²⁸ Two points in this passage should be noted: one, guilt incurred in the commission of a crime outlives the criminal; two, expiation for such crimes must be effected by a descendant of the criminal. These requirements, of course, are integral to the Theban Legend; yet, Ballanche in places freely modified the traditional story to suit his purposes.²⁹ The fact that he stressed and, as we shall see, extended the role of expiation in his version, whereas other modern adaptations of the legend have emphasized other aspects of the tale,³⁰ suggests that the theme of vicarious expiation was important to Ballanche.

The crimes of Oedipus, then, require expiation by one of his descendants. Antigone, it is quickly apparent, is the only possible candidate; her brothers are impious and Ismene, as in Sophocles, lacks the strength of character to sacrifice herself. Realizing that she, and she alone, can divert the anger of the gods from Thebes, Antigone accepts her destiny, and, firm in the conviction that the gods have chosen her, willingly gives up her life for her family and her city. Tiresias apostrophizes the heroine in these words:

²⁷ Ballanche's *Antigone*, like Sophocles' tragedy, is built on the conflict between the civic duty of obedience to human law and the moral duty of obedience to a higher law: "Ma soeur, disait à son tour Antigone, les lois peuvent-elles jamais ordonner une impiété?" *OC*, 1:286.

²⁸ *OC*, 1:244–245.

²⁹ As he explains in *OC*, 1:43–44.

³⁰ Jean Anouilh, for example, built his play around the equally Sophoclean theme of resistance to versus collaboration with authority. See Arnold Arens, "Die Antigone-Bearbeitung von P. S. Ballanche" in *Text-Etymologie. Untersuchungen zu Testkörper und Textinhalt* (Stuttgart: F. Steiner, 1987), 196–205. For a discussion of several adaptations of the Antigone story, see Simone Fraisse, *Le mythe d'Antigone* (Paris: A. Colin, 1974) and George Steiner, *Antigones* (New York: Oxford UP, 1984), although Steiner does not discuss Ballanche's *Antigone*.

Sortez donc des funestes palais de Laius, vous n'êtes plus faite pour les habiter; sortez des palais de Laius, vierge sublime! sortez, non point pour charmer les regards des hommes, non point pour être l'ornement de la maison d'un époux, mais pour accomplir votre dernier sacrifice, le sacrifice expiatoire qui doit effacer les crimes non vengés, qui doit désarmer la colère du ciel, et mettre fin à tant de calamités (*OC*, 1:272–273).

Antigone, we learn, has been prepared since childhood for her role as expiatory victim. Remembering Antigone's childhood in light the tragic events he recounts, Tiresias realizes that "les dieux avaient pris soin eux-mêmes de parer d'avance cette noble et touchant victime".³¹ Ballanche presents Antigone throughout the work as having lived a life of pious innocence, magnanimous toward others and devoted to the gods. She is rarely referred to solely by her name; she is "la pieuse Antigone", "la pieuse fille", "la fille magnanime", "l'âme sublime", or, most commonly, "la vierge". The dying Oedipus encapsulates his daughter's life in the prophetic words: "Ta vie entière n'aura été qu'une vie de dévouement et de sacrifice".³² Ballanche's insistence on the purity of Antigone's life serves to emphasize her status as an innocent victim. "Personne ne viendra-t-il délivrer la vierge innocente, la douce victime?", cry Antigone's childhood friends.³³ The word *victim* strengthens the force of *innocent*; together the substantive and modifier indicate the transition from expiation understood as atonement for one's own crime to expiation signifying atonement for the crimes of others. Thus Oedipus endured expiatory suffering, but was not an expiatory victim.

Antigone has been prepared for her ultimate act of expiation, her death, by a life of suffering. "Je suis née dans le malheur, je dois vivre, et, sans doute, hélas, mourir dans le malheur. Le malheur est le tissu même de ma vie".³⁴ So far there is very little difference between Antigone and the miserable Inès de Castro. But Antigone's death, in which the themes of innocence, suffering, piety, and expiation coincide, clearly differentiates her from Inès. Creon, furious at Antigone's flouting of his edict forbidding the burial of Polynices, condemns Antigone to death by starvation and orders her sealed in

³¹ *OC*, 1:273. See also 1:277.

³² *OC*, 1:120. In a manuscript fragment that appears to be a discarded draft of the "Epilogue" to *Antigone*, Ballanche stresses the religious nature of Antigone's innocence: "cette victime noble et pure est un personnage éminemment religieux". BML, MS 2392/17.

³³ *OC*, 1:302. See also 1:297, 308, 310.

³⁴ *OC*, 1:196.

a cave. A crowd of women gather outside the cave and converse with the immured Antigone, who tells them, in words reminiscent of the “Fragments”, that her grief has become unbearable and that, no longer wishing to live, she welcomes death.³⁵ Antigone soon dies, though not of starvation nor, as in Sophocles, by her own hand. Rather, under the weight of her suffering life simply recedes from her body as beauty fades from a cut rose.³⁶ This is an expiatory death par excellence; there is no discernible cause of death, only the relinquishing of life for the crimes of others. As in *Inès de Castro*, an innocent woman has died as the result of a ruler’s injustice. The difference lies in the effect that Antigone’s death has on Thebes. Inès’ death effects no reconciliation between either Don Pedro and King Alphonse or between Don Pedro and his subjects. Instead, the crowned skeleton of Inès reigns as a memorial to suffering and injustice. The death of Antigone, however, restores the house of Laius and the city of Thebes to a right relationship with the gods by atoning for the guilt that had exposed them to divine vengeance. Antigone’s expiation thereby receives a social dimension lacking in Ballanche’s previous works.

Inasmuch as recent commentators have taken to linking Ballanche’s notion of expiation with René Girard’s discussion of sacrifice,³⁷ let us note that while Girard does interpret Sophocles’ Antigone as a Christ figure, he insists on the non-sacrificial nature of Christ’s death, a death, moreover, that deconstructs the whole sacrificial system by revealing its founding mechanism.³⁸ Ballanche, however, insists on a sacrificial reading of the gospel text that makes Christ’s death the archetypal sacrificial death, which all other sacrificial deaths foreshadow or recall. The idea of expiation in *Antigone* as a religio-social law by which the innocent suffer for the guilt of others reflects Joseph de Maistre’s famous principle, enunciated in Book Three of *Considérations sur la France*, of the reversibility of suffering. Ballanche’s insistence on bloodless sacrifice, however, suggests the concomitant influence of Louis-Claude de Saint-Martin, the Illuminist for whom suffering

³⁵ OC, 1:301.

³⁶ OC, 1:306–307.

³⁷ For example, Arlette Michel: “On ne peut manquer de rapprocher de la réflexion ballanchienne sur le sacrifice celle de R. Girard”. Ballanche, *Le Vieillard et le jeune homme*, éd. Arlette Michel (Paris: Garnier, 1981), 43, n. 7.

³⁸ René Girard, *Things Hidden Since the Foundation of the World* (Stanford: Stanford UP, 1989), 170, 179; on Antigone, 244.

purifies humanity in preparation for regeneration.³⁹ This fact, along with many common points arising from their shared platonism, led one of Ballanche's friends to hail *Antigone* as "un poème martiniste".⁴⁰

Antigone makes a second contribution to the well-being of her fellow Thebans, a contribution that complements rather than issues from her expiation: she furthers their moral education. Antigone's conviction, expressed most explicitly in her conversation with the woman gathered around the cave in which she had been immured, that death is not an end but the beginning of a new life opened the eyes of her contemporaries to the existence of a future life: "Elle nous parlait de la vie future; et ses nobles pensées élevaient notre âme".⁴¹ In the Epilogue to *Antigone*, Ballanche states that his intention in writing the work is not to rehash the familiar details of the ancient tragedy but rather to rescue the myth of the house of Laius from centuries of misinterpretation and establish it as a true depiction of life on earth and a witness to the commencement of the moral education of humanity:

On a refusé d'y voir l'histoire même de l'homme, l'histoire de ses misères, de ses faiblesses, de ses courtes et trompeuses félicités, de ses longues douleurs, de ses chagrins amers, de ses tristesses infinies; on a refusé aussi d'y voir le développement des plus hautes pensées et des sentiments les plus généreux; car le malheur est une belle révélation de l'homme moral (*OC*, 1:327–328).

Antigone reveals a new moral order, an order in which ancient *fatalité*—that is, the hopeless submission to fate characteristic of the pre-Christian world—is overcome. The crimes of Oedipus symbolize Ballanche's depiction of antiquity as an endless cycle of misery:

Ainsi les peuples se succèdent les uns aux autres sans rencontrer le repos; ainsi les générations naissent et meurent au sein de la douleur; ainsi l'homme vit dans de continuelles alarmes, et la voix du gémissement sans cesse se fait entendre par toute la terre (*OC*, 1:326).

It is the glory of Antigone to have broken this dismal cycle of destiny both for her family through her act of expiation and for her city through her teaching. Just as Antigone's death removed the curse

³⁹ Louis-Claude de Saint-Martin, *Le Ministère de l'Homme-Esprit* (Paris: 1802; reprinted Paris: Diffusion Rosicrucienne, 1992), 86.

⁴⁰ Sainte-Beuve, *Portraits contemporains*, 2:19–20.

⁴¹ *OC*, 1:310. See also 1:302.

from her family, so her teaching revealed to the Thebans that they need not be bound by destiny. Ballanche explicitly indicates Antigone's dual role: she is both "une victime pure qui expie les fautes des autres" and "une divinité secourable qui encourage et console".⁴² That by *divinité secourable* Ballanche means not an independent goddess in the manner of Greek myth but rather a messenger from heaven is clear from his firm linking of Antigone's mission to God's unflagging concern for humanity:

Nous ne sommes donc point isolés sur cette terre de deuil; non, Dieu jamais n'abandonna sa noble créature: à coté des erreurs, de l'infortune, même de l'opprobre, il plaça l'innocence, la vertu, le dévouement; et l'homme, ce roi détrôné, traverse son exil, toujours accompagné de l'Antigone que le ciel lui envoya (*OC*, 1:329).

L'homme here refers nicely to both Oedipus, the exiled King of Thebes, and humanity as a whole, whom the Fall dethroned as lord of creation. Antigone, then, is a symbol of God's ongoing love for and communication with his fallen creation.

Important as Antigone's expiation is, Ballanche's version of her story subordinates her death to her role as teacher. Antigone's life "fut une vie d'expiation pour plusieurs et d'exemple pour tous",⁴³ that is, of expiation for the house of Laius, and an example for all Thebes. Antigone has become the evangelist of the new, higher moral law that will free Gentile humanity from its bondage to fate. In her dual role as expiator and prophet of a new moral law, Antigone foreshadows the Christian Messiah.⁴⁴ Though Antigone's expiatory death usurps to some degree Christ's role, her death has so limited an efficacy that it stands more as a figure of Christ's universal atonement (what Antigone did for the house of Laius, Christ does for all humanity) than as an encroachment on Christ's unique and sufficient atonement. Here again, the subordination of Antigone's expiatory role to her teaching role is significant. Like the Timagenes of *Mort d'un platonicien*, she bears witness to the Gentile world of the coming of Christianity. Ballanche here joins the venerable Christian exegetical

⁴² *OC*, 1:329.

⁴³ *OC*, 1:323.

⁴⁴ We recall that Ballanche conceived of his *Antigone* as a Christian poem: "J'ai pris mon sujet dans les temps anciens, et je l'ai transporté tout entier au sein des croyances modernes; . . . Ce christianisme en puissance, qui est venu animer ainsi la composition". *OC*, 1:43.

practice of interpreting pagan myth and philosophy as obscure anticipations of the Christian revelation.⁴⁵

Antigone displays to the reader an archaeology of the series of meanings with which Ballanche invested expiation to 1814. In the lowest stratum, preserved from Ballanche's earliest works (*Epopée Lyonnaise*, *La Grande Chartreuse*, and the "Fragments"), is the notion of this world as a place of suffering and of recompense for suffering received in the next life. At the next level, one may recognize the death of an innocent person for the crimes of others and the witness made by the expiatory victim to the life to come from *Inès de Castro*. Finally, in the most recent stratum expiation may be seen to have acquired a social dimension. While noting the transformation undergone by the concept of expiation in *Antigone*, one must not overemphasize the extent of this transformation. Expiation in *Antigone* remains subordinate to the anticipation of the new moral law of Christianity and Antigone's expiation foreshadows, rather than substitutes for, Christ's expiation. Similarly, while a notion of progress (though the word *progrès* does not appear in *Antigone*) is suggested in the new moral order glimpsed by Antigone, it remains only promissory. Antigone's expiatory power is incommensurate with her moral vision: her death lifts the divine curse from her family but cannot inaugurate the new moral order for all humanity. Only the advent of Christianity, to which her expiation, like her teaching, can only point, will establish the new order.

Revolution and Restoration

Though Ballanche insists that *Antigone* is not an allegory of current affairs, he admits in the "Epilogue" that he was preoccupied with the state of France during its composition and there offers a concise summary of his political views in 1814. Rehearsing Maistre's Traditionalist interpretation of the French Revolution familiar to us from *Du Sentiment*, Ballanche depicts the Revolution as a catastrophe in which the French people "expiat ses fautes nombreuses, ses coupables

⁴⁵ On the Medieval and Renaissance practice of allegorical exegesis of pagan literature, see Jean Seznec's chapter "The Moral Tradition" in *The Survival of the Pagan Gods*, trans. Barbara Sessions (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1953). On the renewal of this tradition in French Romanticism, see Jean-Claude Fizaine, "Les aspects mystiques du romantisme française" in *Romantisme* 11 (1976): 10.

erreurs”.⁴⁶ Ballanche next identifies Bonaparte with Oedipus and compares the sufferings of Europe under his tyranny to those of unhappy Thebes:

Un autre Oedipe, un nouveau roi de l'énigme, précipitait la malheureuse France dans la consternation et dans les larmes. L'Europe entière était devenue comme l'ancienne Cadmée; par-tout les sillons engraisés de sang semblaient ne produire sans cesse de nouveaux bataillons que pour présenter sans cesse de nouvelles moissons à la mort (*OC*, 1:331).

In later works Ballanche frequently returns to the idea of Bonaparte as an ancient man in the modern world, whose anachronistic attempt to re-establish the ancient principle of *fatalité* in modern Europe threatened to plunge the continent into a catastrophic regression into barbarism.⁴⁷ Ballanche's hatred of “the new king of the riddle” was, in the psychological sense, overdetermined. To his underlying family royalism,⁴⁸ may be added the pacific Ballanche's disgust at the unending cycle of war into which Bonaparte had plunged France: “L'incendie et le meurtre, se succédant sans relâche, étaient continuellement vengés par le meurtre et l'incendie; le carnage ne s'arrêtait jamais; et nos villes, naguère si florissantes, attendaient, à chaque instant, le sort le plus déplorable”.⁴⁹ Bonaparte's treatment of the Catholic Church further alienated Ballanche (despite his initial embrace of the Concordat), and, finally, his harassment of Juliette Récamier put the seal on Ballanche's hatred.

Shortly after Waterloo Ballanche recorded his passionate opposition to Bonaparte in the manuscript fragment published as “Fragments Politiques” by Jean-René Derré.⁵⁰ Though written soon after *Antigone*, its ideas belong to the intellectual world of the *Institutions sociales*, in which its thrust is reproduced, so I shall forego discussion of it here. Another manuscript, titled “Essai sur la Poésie” and dating from the early Restoration, starkly summarizes Ballanche's detestation of

⁴⁶ *OC*, 1:331.

⁴⁷ *OC*, 2:177; 4:275; and 6:276.

⁴⁸ The Ballanches' royalist opposition to Bonaparte placed them at odds with the majority of their fellow Lyonnais, most of whom supported Bonaparte out of gratitude for his reconstruction of their city after the devastation of the Terror (hence the renaming of rue Bellecour as rue Bonaparte). Bonaparte received, crucially, an enthusiastic welcome when he passed through Lyon on his return from Saint Helena.

⁴⁹ *OC*, 1:331–332.

⁵⁰ Jean-René Derré, *Dossier de La Ville des Expiations de Ballanche* (Paris: CNRS, 1981), 89–96.

Bonaparte and his loyalty to the Bourbons: “Bonaparte représent[e] le mauvais côté de notre siècle. Louis XVIII représent[e] le bon côté”.⁵¹ The draft of “Essai sur la Poésie”, which consists of some very rough notes for a work on poetry, plus two proposed tables of contents, one considerably more detailed than the other, was initially conceived as an outline for the proposed but unwritten “Préface” to the first edition of *Antigone* mentioned in *OC*, 1:41. The longer table of contents shows that Ballanche broadened his ideas into a sketch for a separate book on poetics on the model of Germaine de Staël’s *Littérature considérée dans ses rapports avec les institutions sociales* (1800).⁵² No such work was written, but Ballanche incorporated many of the ideas outlined here into the *Institutions sociales* (one of the variant titles in the draft reads “Essai sur la Poésie et sur les Institutions sociales”). The quotation contrasting Bonaparte and Louis XVIII appears at the end of the long table of contents as an example of an appropriate subject for a contemporary national epic.

Ballanche joyously welcomed the news of Bonaparte’s fall.⁵³ It, rather than 9 Thermidor, truly marked for him the end of the Revolutionary Terror, which, in Ballanche’s view, Bonaparte had not quelled but instead extended over all Europe. Ballanche confesses that the event took him by surprise as in the midst of Bonaparte’s savagery he had foreseen no end to calamity: “je prévoyais une ruine entière”.⁵⁴ That France, indeed all of European civilization, was quite suddenly delivered from utter ruin seemed to Ballanche explicable only through the action of inscrutable providence: “Pouvions-nous en effet connaître les secrets de cette providence divine qui veillait encore sur nous? Pouvions-nous savoir que tout-à-coup aux prodiges de la colère allaient succéder les miracles de la clémence?”⁵⁵ Identifying Bonaparte, as in earlier works he had identified the Revolution itself, as an instrument of divine chastisement, Ballanche here correspondingly interprets the Restoration as a manifestation of divine mercy. In hindsight, however, Ballanche realizes that providence had not acted on utterly barren

⁵¹ BML, MSS 1806–1810, Dossier 18, “Essai sur la Poésie”.

⁵² See Arlette Michel, “Aux sources du Romantisme français: Madame de Staël, Ballanche et la Renaissance” in *Ecumenismo della Cultura*, 3 vols. (Firenze: L. S. Olschki, 1981), 3:149–157.

⁵³ Ballanche to Beuchot, in BN, n.a.f. MS 5197.

⁵⁴ *OC*, 1:332. This passage recalls the total destruction of European civilization envisaged in *Épopée Lyonnaise*.

⁵⁵ *OC*, 1:332.

soil; although France had abandoned the Bourbons, the Bourbons had not abandoned France: “Mais d’illustres victimes priaient pour nous dans le ciel, en même temps que l’exil nous conservait les restes précieux du sang de nos rois”.⁵⁶ In presenting the deaths of Louis XVI and others of his family as the sacrifice of innocent victims for the crimes of France, Ballanche reproduces the standard Legitimist interpretation of the death of the King. Maistre, for example, cites the deaths of Louis XVI and Madame Elizabeth, his sister, as examples of his principle of the reversibility of suffering (according to which the suffering of the innocent atone for the crimes of the guilty).⁵⁷ Ballanche, however, downplays the expiatory function of the Bourbon martyrs in favour of stressing the efficacy of their intercession before God on behalf of perfidious France. Just as Antigone’s teaching complemented and in some sense superseded her expiatory function, so the Bourbons’ intercession appears to have been more efficacious than their expiation.

Ballanche’s assertion that the prayers of executed Bourbons and the emigration of surviving Bourbons maintained a bond between France and God unequivocally equates Legitimism with true religion. He makes the equation explicit by identifying the Restoration as at once a political and a religious event:

Religion des souvenirs, tu n’étais pas éteinte dans nos coeurs: tu préparais en silence le retour de cette famille qui semble être pour nous la patrie elle-même. . . . Le dépôt de nos véritables lois, de nos véritables moeurs, des seules institutions qui nous convinssent, ce dépôt sacré existait loin de nous: il nous a été rapporté intact par le noble héritier [Louis XVIII] de nos touchantes et vénérables traditions. Et, s’il m’était permis de parler encore une fois un langage duquel j’ai dû m’accoutumer, je dirais que nos dieux domestiques nous ont été rendus (*OC*, 1:333).

Louis XVIII here symbolizes both *la patrie* and France’s return to true religion after the impiety of the Revolution and Empire. Falling back on the linguistic classicism of *Antigone*, Ballanche expresses the dual role of the Bourbons by hailing them as France’s *dieux domestiques*. This phrase recalls the Roman *lares et penates*, but it is obvious that

⁵⁶ *OC*, 1:323–333.

⁵⁷ Joseph de Maistre *Considérations sur la France* in *Oeuvres complètes*, 14 vols. (Lyon: Vitte, 1884–1886), 1:38. On the Conventionnels’ inversion of this interpretation, see the chapter “La Mort du Roi” in Daniel Arasse, *La Guillotine et l’imaginaire de la Terreur* (Paris: Flammarion, 1987).

Ballanche accords the Bourbons a far greater role than that of household guardian spirits; they represent France before God and embody God's providential concern for France.⁵⁸

Ballanche's religious Legitimism echoes the standard Catholic Traditionalist interpretation of the Bourbons' relationship to France. The classic formulation is again Maistre's: "Français! faites place au Roi très-chrétien, portez-le vous-même sur son trône antique; relevez son oriflamme, et que son or, voyageant encore d'un pôle à l'autre, porte de toutes parts la devise triomphale: LE CHRIST COMMANDE, IL REGNE, IL EST VAINQUEUR".⁵⁹ Ballanche's endorsement of this opinion in *Antigone* is entirely consistent with the reactionary view of the Revolution and loyalty to the Bourbon cause that he had propagated in *Epopée Lyonnaise* and *Du Sentiment*. Paul Bénichou's claim that *Antigone* combines a counter-revolutionary sensibility with a principle of development and progress⁶⁰ assimilates it to Ballanche's works of 1818–1820. As we have seen, there is no meaningful principle of progress in *Antigone*; in fact, *Antigone* in no way breaks with the political allegiances of Ballanche's earlier works. The narrow Legitimism of *Antigone* should more properly be understood as the logical extension of the views of *Epopée Lyonnaise* at the time of the Restoration. Sainte-Beuve, in a much quoted passage, remarked:

1814 ou 1815 fut véritablement pour M. Ballanche l'année décisive, la grande-année climatérique de sa vie, le moment effectif de l'*initiation*, selon son langage; ce fut l'heure où, sortant de la limite des sentiments individuels et de la divagation aimable des rêveries, il embrassa la sphère du développement humaine et tout un ordre de pensées sociales dont il devint l'hierophante harmonieux et doux.⁶¹

⁵⁸ Rastoul is mistaken in his claim that Ballanche welcomed the Restoration not because he loved the Bourbons, but because he loved peace. Ballanche, *La Ville des Expiations*, éd. Amand Rastoul (Paris: Editions des Presses françaises, 1926), xxxix. Whatever Ballanche's later disenchantment with the dynasty, in 1814 he fervently supported the Bourbons.

⁵⁹ Maistre, *Considérations sur la France* in *Oeuvres complètes*, 1:66. Lamennais restated this view three years after *Antigone*: "Quand Louis [XVI] monta sur l'échafaud, ce ne fut pas seulement un mortel vertueux qui succomba sous la rage de quelques scélérats; ce fut le Pouvoir lui-même, vivante image de la Divinité dont il émane, ce fut le principe de l'ordre et de l'existence politique, ce fut la société entière qui périt". *Essai sur l'indifférence en matière de religion*, vol. 1 (1817) in *Oeuvres complètes* 12 vols. (Paris: Daubrée et Caillex, 1836–1837), 1:336.

⁶⁰ Paul Bénichou, "Le Grand oeuvre de Ballanche: chronologie et inachèvement" in *Revue d'histoire littéraire de la France* 75 (1975): 737.

⁶¹ Sainte-Beuve, *Portraits contemporains*, 2:2. See also 2:20.

If this passage is taken to mean, as A. J. George (and presumably Bénichou) seems to think it ought,⁶² that *Antigone* marks a sharp break with Ballanche's earlier preoccupations, I must object. Though it indeed adds a social dimension to Ballanche's conception of expiation, we have seen that *Antigone* takes up and reinforces many of Ballanche's familiar themes and opinions. *Antigone*, read without anticipation, is more a summing up than a bold new departure. Sainte-Beuve's comments, however, permit a different interpretation, one that suggests that it was the events, public and private, of the years 1814 and 1815 that were decisive for Ballanche, rather than the works of those years.⁶³ On this view, Ballanche's reorientation first manifests itself not in *Antigone* but in *Institutions sociales* (1818). This hypothesis is well worth examining, and it is to this task we turn in Part Two.

⁶² George, *Pierre-Simon Ballanche*, 51.

⁶³ This interpretation is endorsed by both Herriot, *Madame Récamier et ses amis*, 2:4, and Auguste Viatte, *Les Sources occultes du Romantisme*, 2 vols. (Paris: Champion, 1928), 2:222-223.

PART TWO

RESTORATION AND SOCIAL THOUGHT

La marche progressive de l'esprit humain est indépendante de l'homme même.

Institutions sociales

CHAPTER FOUR

THE 1818–1820 WORKS

Ballanche and the Récamier salon

In the years immediately following 1814, Ballanche's friendship with Juliette Récamier increasingly drew him into the intellectual life of Paris. In particular, Ballanche encountered in Récamier's salon a vigorous Liberalism. Though Récamier welcomed the Restoration, which had authorized her return to Paris in a document dated 25 April 1814, she did not abandon the Staëlian Liberalism that had led to her exile under Bonaparte. In fact, she used her friends among the royalists, as well as the Duke of Wellington's infatuation for her, to lobby on behalf of those of her Liberal friends whose activities since 1789 had compromised them in the eyes of the new regime. Récamier prided herself on her ability to attract and maintain friendships with people of all political allegiances, and toleration was the rule of her salon, where Ultra and Liberal leaders could meet under truce. Récamier's old Ultra friends Mathieu and Adrien de Montmorency were regulars; and while Staël rarely attended owing to her increasingly poor health, the Liberal cause was more than adequately represented in the person of Benjamin Constant.

The link between Constant and Récamier was Staël herself. Constant, Germaine's lover since 1794, had often encountered Juliette at Coppet in the days when Staël's Swiss estate had been a refuge for Liberal opponents of Bonaparte. He had always regarded his lover's beautiful friend with critical detachment, but on 31 August 1814, his passion for Germaine gone, Constant was summoned before Récamier. Juliette had received a letter from her friend Caroline, Queen of Naples, in whose company she had passed much of her sojourn in Italy. Caroline and her husband, Joachim Murat, the former Maréchal de l'Empire and now King of Naples, believed that the Congress of Vienna had resolved to remove Murat from his throne. She asked Récamier to find someone willing and capable of intervening at Vienna in favour of her husband. Récamier decided that Constant was just the man required. She had also promised Staël that she would take

Constant to task for his heartless behaviour toward her. As a result of their discussion, Constant undertook to write a memorandum on behalf of King Joachim. But Récamier failed miserably in her secondary task; far from repenting of his treatment of Staël, Constant promptly fell in love with her emissary. Juliette was amused, Germaine furious, and for the next fourteen months Benjamin, as his diaries show, oscillated wildly between hope and despair.¹ Récamier, whom Staël had left under no uncertainty as to Constant's unreliable nature, had no intention of taking the importunate Benjamin as a lover, but equally she had no intention of denying herself the pleasure of such agreeable attentions; besides, the matter of Murat required Constant's assistance.

Constant at first regarded Récamier's attachment to Ballanche with condescension. In January 1815 he wrote to her, in the course of one of numerous letters of desperate passion, the mutual mastery of which genre had been one of the true accomplishments of his and Germaine's affair: "avez-vous donc nulle amitié pour moi, pas même autant que pour M. Ballanche ou tel autre?"² Récamier's behaviour soon made it clear to Constant that he would have to revise his judgement. A few days later she forbade him to speak of his love for her tête-à-tête, insisting that Ballanche be present.³ Constant found himself put to work on Ballanche's behalf; at Récamier's command he wrote an article praising the recently published *Antigone* and petitioned Guizot, unsuccessfully, to have Ballanche awarded the légion d'honneur.⁴ By March 1815 Constant understood Ballanche's true worth to Récamier: "Je puis n'être que votre ami, et je ne demande que cela. Je demande une place pareille à celle de M. Ballanche".⁵ But even this, humbling as it must have been for Constant, was asking

¹ J. Christopher Herold, *Mistress To An Age: A Life of Madame de Staël* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1959), 443–453. Chateaubriand's account of this episode appears in *Mémoires d'Outre-Tombe*, éd. Maurice Levaillant, 4 vols. (Paris: Flammarion, 1964), 3:378–387.

² Constant to Récamier, 14 January 1815, in Benjamin Constant, *Lettres à Mme. Récamier (1807–1830)*, édition critique, avec introduction et commentaires par Ephraïm Harpaz (Paris: Klincksieck, 1977), 89.

³ Journal entry for 19 January 1815 in Benjamin Constant, *Journaux Intimes*, éd. Alfred Roulin et Charles Roth (Paris: Gallimard, 1952), 428.

⁴ For the article on *Antigone* see Constant's entries for 17 and 28 February 1815 in *Journaux Intimes*, 434 and his letters to Récamier dated 23 January, 14 February, and 4–5 March 1815 in *Lettres à Mme. Récamier*, 99, 123, 135. For the Légion d'honneur, see the entry for 24 January 1815 in *Journaux Intimes*, 429 and letters dated 23, 25, and 26 January 1815 in *Lettres à Mme. Récamier*, 100–103.

⁵ Constant to Récamier, 2 March 1815, in Constant, *Lettres à Mme. Récamier*, 132.

too much. After several more months of paroxysms and a peculiar episode in which, at Constant's request, the mystical prophetess Julie de Krüdener (one of Joseph de Maistre's Saint-Petersburg converts to Catholicism) attempted to create a spiritual bond between Benjamin's and Juliette's souls, Constant's infatuation with Récamier ended as suddenly as it had begun. His diary entry for 2 November 1815 reads: "Je sors de mon délire".⁶

This episode is significant, both because it indicates how thoroughly Ballanche had become integrated into Récamier's circle and because it brought Constant into regular contact with the members of the Récamier salon at a time of intense intellectual activity for him. Constant had published *De l'esprit de conquête et de l'usurpation* in 1814, and during the Hundred Days helped draft Bonaparte's "Acte additionnel aux constitutions de l'Empire" and published his *Principes de politique*. Récamier had been disappointed when Constant rallied to Bonaparte, though in keeping with her policy of tolerance she did not exclude him from her salon. Further, as Constant seems genuinely to have believed that Bonaparte intended to establish a constitutional regime, and as his works written during the Hundred Days largely reflect the Liberal convictions he shared with Staël, Récamier seems to have regarded his Napoleonic adventure as a moral, rather than a political or intellectual, failing. Ballanche was in constant contact with Récamier in 1814 and 1815; he wrote to her almost daily, and made an extended visit to see her in Paris from October 1814 to August 1815. Ballanche often discussed political questions in his letters, and when in Paris he cannot have failed to participate in the political discussions of her salon.

Constant's Liberalism would not have been completely foreign to the Legitimist author of *Antigone*. Ballanche had met Staël in 1805 in the course of the same trip to Geneva with Chateaubriand during which he had visited the Grande Chartreuse, and had undoubtedly heard a great deal about her from Récamier. Bredin, Ballanche's friend and sounding-board in Lyon, declared in 1814 that he had read only one of Staël's works, but that he had read it with great pleasure and found therein confirmation of many of his own views on morality.⁷ Five weeks later, Bredin noted that he has just read

⁶ Constant, *Journaux Intimes*, 453.

⁷ Bredin to A.-M. Ampère, 10 June 1814, in Ampère, *Correspondance du grand Ampère*, éd. Louis de Launay, 2 vols. (Paris: Gauthier-Villars, 1936), 2:374. A few years later Bredin defends Staël's ideas in a letter to a Swiss Protestant pastor who seems to

Constant's *De l'esprit de conquête et de l'usurpation*.⁸ In both cases, Bredin's correspondent is A. M. Ampère, who seems to have recommended these authors to him. Given the intimate intellectual relations among Ampère, Bredin, and Ballanche, it is almost certain that Ballanche would have read, or at the very least discussed with Bredin, the works of Staël and Constant. In 1819 Ballanche tried to interest Récamier in collaborating on a book about Coppet as a memorial to Staël. Though the project was dropped when Récamier's enthusiasm quickly evaporated, surviving fragments of it reveal the high esteem in which Ballanche held her friend.⁹ Ballanche may even have seen the manuscript of Staël's unpublished *Des Circonstances actuelles qui peuvent terminer la Révolution*, in which she sought to terminate the Revolution in a compromise between moderates of both sides, which had been entrusted to Récamier.¹⁰ It is impossible to tell whether Récamier received the manuscript before or after Staël's death. It is worth recalling, though, that in 1810 Récamier had acted as mediator between Staël and Bonaparte's censors in the matter of *De l'Allemagne*.¹¹

Of the varieties of French Liberalism,¹² that of the Staël-Constant variety was most congenial to Ballanche owing to its respect for religion and distrust of republican democracy. Hence, in Récamier's salon Ballanche encountered a body of thought that presented ideas derived from the Revolutionary tradition but in a form that evaded his immediate objections. The ideas of the Paris Liberals, moreover, seconded the Liberalism Ballanche had encountered locally in Lyon,

have disapproved of his notorious fellow Genevan. Bredin to Auguste Touchon, 21 July 1818, in Bredin, *Lettres inédites de Claude-Julien Bredin à A. M. Ampère, au pasteur Auguste Touchon et à Mme. Touchon*, éd. Louis de Launay (Lyon: Rey, 1936), 112.

⁸ Bredin to A.-M. Ampère, 18 July 1814, in *Correspondance du grand Ampère*, 2:480.

⁹ See Edouard Herriot, *Madame Récamier et ses amis*, 2 vols. (Paris: Plon-Nourrit, 1909), 2:65–66. Ballanche, Bredin, and Ampère all seem to have known Staël's son Auguste. See Claude-Julien Bredin, *Correspondance philosophique et littéraire avec Ballanche*. Publiée et commentée par Auguste Viatte (Paris: Boccard, 1928), 146, 148, 221, 250, 254–259. The link was the Genevan Edouard Diodati, a friend of Bredin and Auguste de Staël's brother-in-law.

¹⁰ See Lucia Omacini's introduction to her edition of *Des Circonstances actuelles* (Genève: Droz, 1979), lvi. *Des Circonstances actuelles* was first published in 1906.

¹¹ For this episode, see Herold, *Mistress To An Age*, 388–389.

¹² Liberals formed less a cohesive party than a loose alliance of theorists and politicians, of which the most important sub-groups were the Doctrinaires (Pierre-Paul Royer-Collard, François Guizot, and Victor Cousin), the surviving Idéologues (Destutt de Tracy and Pierre Daunou) and their younger Industrialiste continuators (Charles Comte and Charles Dunoyer, and their journal *Le Censeur européen*), the Independents (Staël and Constant), and the radical, or republican, Left (J. A. Manuel, Voyer d'Argenson, and Lafayette). On the complexities of Restoration Liberalism, see Louis Girard, *Les Libéraux français, 1814–1875* (Paris: Aubier, 1985).

where several of Ballanche's old friends from his school days had become important Liberal leaders, above all Camille Jordan.

Jordan, who was again living in Lyon between 1814 and 1816, was linked both to the Staël-Constant axis and to Récamier. We recall that it was Jordan who first introduced Ballanche to her in 1812. Jordan had likely known Staël as early as 1794, when both were active in the centrist Club de Clichy. They certainly saw a great deal of each other at Weimar, where both passed a portion of their sentences of exile imposed by the First Consul, and Jordan had resided at her house at Saint-Ouen on his return from exile in February 1800. Staël fervently admired Jordan's pamphlet *Vrai sens du vote national sur le consulat à vie* (ca. 1802). Later, in 1809, when Staël briefly installed herself and her entourage, including Constant, at Lyon, it was Jordan who acted as the intermediary between the transplanted Coppet group and the local Liberals.¹³ Jordan himself had abstained from active politics from the purge of the Conseil des Cinq Cents, in which he represented Lyon, of 18 fructidor, an V (4 September 1797) until the Restoration, under which he represented the Department of the Ain in the Chamber of Deputies from 1816 until his death in 1821.

Though an enemy of tyranny in all its forms—Conventionnel, Bonapartist, or Restored Bourbon—Jordan had no fixed political philosophy. Sainte-Beuve discerned three moments in Jordan's career:

Sous le directoire, au conseil de cinq cents, il avait voulu civiliser, humaniser la révolution et tirer de cette constitution de l'an III la véritable liberté, la véritable égalité et la justice. Le lendemain du vote pour le consulat à vie, il avait essayé de montrer que cette autre constitution de l'an VIII était perfectible, et qu'avec un peu de bonne volonté on pouvait en tirer des institutions, des garanties, tout un ordre de choses qui terminât la révolution en assurant et en limitant ses conquêtes politiques et civiles. Sous la restauration, il essayait de même de demander à la charte tout ce qu'elle contenait, et d'en faire découler les conséquences naturelles.¹⁴

¹³ Louis Trénard, "Benjamin Constant et les libéraux lyonnais" in *Annales Benjamin Constant* 2 (1982): 58. Sainte-Beuve devoted a long article to this friendship: "Camille Jordan et Mme. de Staël" in *Revue des Deux Mondes* 74 (1868): 42–93. The various factors that conspired to make Restoration Lyon "un centre de vie politique et plus particulièrement un foyer de libéralisme" are discussed in F. Baud, "Caractères généraux du parti libéral à Lyon sous la Restauration" in *Revue d'histoire de Lyon* 12 (1913): 217–226.

¹⁴ Sainte-Beuve, "Jordan et Mme. de Staël", 92.

In fact, Jordan's hatred of tyranny resembled more the moral conviction of an Old Testament prophet than the reasoned conclusion of a political theorist. It is therefore difficult to locate Jordan precisely in one or other of the varieties of Liberalism, or rather, at various times in his career he approximated almost all of them, excepting only the radical, republican Left. Jordan's convictions complemented those of Staël and Constant, whom he admired and who admired him, and toward whom his respect for religion and distrust of democratic republicanism inclined him. In the early years of the Restoration, then, Ballanche's Legitimist beliefs were exposed to a double dose of Liberalism; one from Récamier's salon in Paris, and one from old friends in Lyon, especially Camille Jordan.¹⁵

From as early as February 1813, eight months after he first met Récamier, Ballanche had been sure that he did not want to remain a provincial publisher for the rest of his life. He felt oppressed by the relentless pressure for intellectual and religious orthodoxy exerted by the Lyon bourgeoisie, and dreamed of selling the family business and moving to Paris, where he would devote his days to study and writing and his evenings to Juliette.¹⁶ Ballanche *père*, however, from whom Pierre-Simon kept his feelings on this matter hidden, had no intention of selling the business now that it was prospering once again, so for the time being Pierre-Simon's dream remained just that. Nevertheless, Ballanche's residence in Paris in 1814–1815 renewed his resolve to settle there at the earliest opportunity. By September 1815 he had convinced his father to sell their business. Récamier, never one to forfeit a conquest, encouraged his determination by enumerating all the advantages Paris offered him. For Ballanche, however, there was only one attraction: "Paris n'est pas plus nécessaire à mon talent qu'à moi-même. C'est vous, et non point Paris, qui m'est [sic] nécessaire".¹⁷

In 1816 Ballanche's father and sister fell ill,¹⁸ the consequent increase in responsibilities compelled Pierre-Simon to renounce any thoughts

¹⁵ Ballanche paid tribute to Jordan in his *Eloge de Camille Jordan*, read before the Académie de Lyon in August 1823. The *Eloge* was reprinted in *OC*, 3:109–152.

¹⁶ Ballanche to Beuchot, 19 February 1813, in BN, n.a.f. MS 5197, feuillets 53–54.

¹⁷ Ballanche to Récamier, 30 September 1815, in Agnès Kettler, *Lettres de Ballanche à Madame Récamier, 1812–1845* (Paris: Champion, 1996), 344.

¹⁸ Aimée suffered from a severe nervous illness. On Aimée, see Kettler, *Lettres de Ballanche à Madame Récamier*, 166–172.

of Paris. Hugues Ballanche died on 20 October 1816. Ballanche quickly arranged to sell the publishing house to another Lyon publisher,¹⁹ in whose hands it retained the name "Ballanche fils", and at last prepared to leave his native city. After a further delay while his sister convalesced, the forty-year-old Ballanche moved permanently to Paris in August 1817. He took rooms at 22 rue Mont Blanc, just around the corner from 31 rue d'Anjou-Saint-Honoré, the house Juliette Récamier bought in 1818 and where, blissfully, he dined each day and passed each evening.²⁰

The unobtrusive M. Récamier had recommenced his financial speculations after his bankruptcy during the Empire only to be ruined for a second time in early 1819. Juliette gave up her own fortune in order to save him,²¹ forcing her to sell the house on the rue d'Anjou-Saint-Honoré. After passing the summer at the Vallée-aux-Loups (at this time owned by Mathieu de Montmorency, not Chateaubriand), she went to live as a boarder at l'Abbaye-aux-Bois at 16 rue de Sèvres. The Abbaye had been among the convents suppressed in 1790, and though it had subsequently been re-established as a religious community it had never reattained its former population of nuns and the sisters rented their extra rooms to indigent ladies of good character. The sisters were pleased to welcome Récamier, even though she was not destitute. She made the Abbaye her home for the rest of her life, occupying at first a small, almost shabby, apartment on the fourth floor, then later, from October 1829, a much more spacious and pleasant apartment on a lower floor overlooking the courtyard and garden.²² Ballanche himself moved in order to remain close to his friend to 23 rue Cherche-Midi. He remained there until the 1830s, when he moved around the corner to 21 rue de Sèvres, then 17, the

¹⁹ Mathieu-Placide Rusand, not, as George says (*Pierre-Simon Ballanche: Precursor of Romanticism* [Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1945], 54), Durand, who was Rusand's son-in-law and who only managed the publishing house for Rusand until taking it over himself in 1823. See Aimé Vingtrinier, *Histoire de l'Imprimerie à Lyon* (Lyon: Storck, 1894), 403.

²⁰ Gaston Frainnet, *Essai sur la philosophie de P.-S. Ballanche* (Paris: Picard, 1903), 56-59.

²¹ The exact nature of the relationship between Jacques-Rose Récamier and Juliette has been the subject of much discussion. The evidence strongly suggests that, as Juliette discovered on her wedding night, Jacques-Rose was her real father. See Kettler, *Lettres de Ballanche à Madame Récamier*, 202-204.

²² Herriot, *Madame Récamier et ses amis*, 2:70, 76. For a first-hand description of Récamier's apartments at the Abbaye, see Chateaubriand, *Mémoires d'Outre-Tombe*, éd. Maurice Levaillant, 4 vols. (Paris: Flammarion, 1964), 3:746-747.

latter being directly opposite the Abbaye-aux-Bois. Lest it be thought that her husband's bankruptcy and her own retreat to the Abbaye put an end to Récamier's social influence, consider these remarks by Sainte-Beuve:

Elle ne tint jamais plus de place dans le monde, que quand elle fut dans ce humble asile, à une extrémité de Paris. C'est de là que son doux génie dégagé des complications trop vives, se fait de plus en plus sentir avec bienfaisance.²³

Another event that occurred about this time disturbed Ballanche far more than a change of address: Chateaubriand reappeared in his life, now as a competitor for Récamier's heart. Chateaubriand, on his own witness, had met Récamier at least twice in the early 1800s and again in 1815 when he read his *Aventures du Dernier Abencérage* to her salon. Yet, it was not until May 1817, when he was seated next to her at a dinner party given by the dying Germaine de Staël, that he was struck by the fascination experienced so frustratingly by so many others:

Je ne la regardais point; elle ne me regardait pas; nous n'échangions pas une parole. Lorsque, vers la fin du dîner, elle m'adressa timidement quelques mots sur la maladie de Mme. de Staël, je tournai un peu la tête, je levai les yeux et je vis mon ange gardien à ma droite.²⁴

Récamier began to receive Chateaubriand in 1818, though it was only in the autumn of that year, after her return from taking the waters at Aix-la-Chapelle, that he began to visit assiduously. Récamier's prudence and level-headedness, which had transmuted the passion of so many would-be lovers into friendship, were no match for the emotions aroused in her by the fascinating, tempestuous, and brilliant writer and politician. Chateaubriand soon usurped first place in her heart and, as her friends feared, her days of tranquillity were over. Chateaubriand's entry into on the intimate circle around Récamier has been likened to the invasion of a hawk into an aviary in which harmonious birds were warbling tranquilly around a dove.²⁵ The dove's friends, concealing their own uneasiness, lamented the effect that a liaison with Chateaubriand would have on her emotional life. Ballanche and Mathieu de Montmorency, in particular, repeatedly warned her against entrusting her happiness to such a notorious egoist. Yet even they, after trying

²³ Sainte-Beuve, *Causeries du Lundi*, 15 vols. (Paris: Garnier, 3^{ème} éd. 1850), 1:133.

²⁴ Chateaubriand, *Mémoires d'Outre-Tombe*, 3:388.

²⁵ Herriot, *Madame Récamier et ses amis*, 2:60.

unsuccessfully to divert her enthusiasm into literary and charitable projects, were forced to concede Chateaubriand hegemony over Récamier's life. Henceforth, the Abbaye-aux-Bois salon, while glorified by Chateaubriand's presence, revolved around his whims.²⁶

Chateaubriand, like Constant a few years earlier, found Récamier's unwavering devotion to Ballanche inexplicable. An almost daily contact with Pierre-Simon under her stern eye forced Chateaubriand to moderate his condescension toward his former publisher, and something resembling friendship grew up between them. Yet Chateaubriand never took Ballanche entirely seriously and in his letters habitually referred to him as the "hiérophante". As for Ballanche, he grumbled about the harm done to society by Chateaubriand's political adventures, but stoically accepted that his rival had captured his idol's heart and was proud to claim the famous man as his friend.

Ballanche's 1818–1820 works

Ballanche's initial euphoria at the Bourbon Restoration quickly turned to distress as he watched the essential intellectual work of re-establishing the foundations of French society degenerate into factional strife between Ultras and Liberals. Increasingly, his interests turned away from his attempts to work out a poetics and toward the political situation. He began to add political reflections to his notes on poetics, and gradually what had been conceived as an *Essai sur la Poésie* became the *Essai sur les Institutions sociales* (1818): "Je m'étais occupé, il y a quelque temps d'un ouvrage que je me proposais d'écrire sur la Poésie. J'avais été conduit, par la force même de la pensée, à appliquer toutes les lois de la Poésie à la Société. Ainsi une discussion toute littéraire finissait par être une discussion politique".²⁷ Ballanche renounced without regret a projected work on the primitive traditions of Atlantis.²⁸ Nevertheless, the new project progressed only slowly and hesitantly as Ballanche worked out his

²⁶ Amélie-Cyvoct Lenormant, *Souvenirs et correspondances tirés des papier de Madame Récamier*, 2 vols. (Paris: Lévy, 1860), 1:307.

²⁷ Ballanche to Récamier, 14 March 1816, in Kettler, *Lettres de Ballanche à Madame Récamier*, 376.

²⁸ "Vous me demandez des nouvelles de l'*Atlantide*; je crains bien qu'elle ne soit engloutie une seconde fois sous les eaux." Ballanche to Amélie Récamier, 3 August

intellectual and emotional responses to the social and political debates of the early Restoration.

Ballanche's discussions of political matters in his letters to Juliette Récamier in the first years of the Restoration show him wary of the Liberal ideas he encountered in her salon. In an 1815 letter discussing their mutual friend, now Liberal Deputy, Camille Jordan, Ballanche sums up his views. He cautions his friend against a too generous opinion of the capacity of the French people to act in a politically responsible manner, insists on the impossibility of creating social institutions by legislative fiat, and deplors the tendency of Liberalism to encourage the spirit of factionalism:

Maintenant voilà que mes inquiétudes recommencent sur notre pauvre patrie. Le grand obstacle au repos, pour elle, est dans sa vanité et son égoïsme. Dites moi où est le dévouement et ce que devenus les sentiments généreux. Quel avenir! J'ai bien peur qu'on ne voie le mal là où il n'est pas.

J'ai vu hier Camille. Ses idées et ses opinions sont toujours celles qui me faisaient tant de peine cet hiver. Je ne les blâme point, comme vous savez, en elle-mêmes; je les blâme quand elles portent à l'inquiétude et à un certain esprit de faction. Ces idées et ces opinions, qui ne peuvent faire de mal lorsqu'elles sont dans de bons esprits, font un très grand mal quand elle se logent ailleurs. Et les bons esprits sont bien rares. Vous avez une trop bonne opinion de nos Français d'aujourd'hui et c'est une erreur que est aussi celle de Camille. Vous vous entendriez parfaitement. Je crois que si vous portiez un jugement plus sévère sur les hommes de notre temps et surtout sur les hommes de la Révolution, vous seriez plus près de la vérité.²⁹

Though Jordan and the Liberals whom Ballanche met in Paris did not evidently convert outright the Legitimist of *Antigone*, Ballanche seems to be more critical of the consequences of Liberal ideas than of the ideas themselves. Further, as shown by a letter written a few months later, he was becoming uncertain of his own position: "les discussions politiques me pèsent. Je m'abstiens même de discuter parce que je ne connais point d'opinion qui me convienne. Je me suis décidé à être roseau et à plier; cela m'ennuie, mais moins encore que de discuter".³⁰ Nevertheless, Ballanche acknowledges the disagreements that separate

1816, in Kettler, *Lettres de Ballanche à Madame Récamier*, 740. Ballanche returned to the themes of the *Atlantide* in *Orphée*. See OC, 1:8.

²⁹ Ballanche to Récamier, 30 September 1815, in Kettler, *Lettres de Ballanche à Madame Récamier*, 342–343.

³⁰ Ballanche to Récamier, 22 January 1816, in Kettler, *Lettres de Ballanche à Madame Récamier*, 359.

him from Camille Jordan: “Camille n’aura rien à vous dire de moi, car nous n’avons point eu d’entretien intime; je les désire et je les fuis. Je crains toujours de voir des murailles s’élever entre moi et ceux que j’aime. Je préfère qu’il n’y ait qu’un fossé”.³¹

On some points, moreover, Ballanche remained a staunch Traditionalist. The debates on the electoral law in the Chamber in the spring of 1816 confirmed Ballanche’s Maistrean belief in the impossibility of creating social institutions without the assistance of time and custom:

Les institutions sont filles du temps et des mœurs. Le législateur ne fait jamais que constater ce qui est. Aussi ne voyez-vous aucune disposition législative sortir, en ce moment, de la force même des choses: tout est arbitraire. On devrait donc ne faire que des règlements et non des lois. Nous autres Français, nous sommes trop pressés; nous voulons toujours aller au devant du temps. La révolution a détruit les éléments mêmes du pacte social: si nous étions sages, nous attendrions que ces éléments se recontrassent. Nous nous ferions des mœurs avant de nous faire des lois.³²

The opening lines of this excerpt clearly recall the sixth chapter of Maistre’s *Considérations sur la France*. Nevertheless, though he never abandoned the Traditionalist horror of a priori social philosophies, Ballanche was beginning to accept that a return to absolutism was impossible and that some sort of mediation between the old and new ideas was necessary.³³ Precisely such a mediation was the goal of the Constitutional Charter promulgated by Louis XVIII in 1814, and Ballanche’s political theorizing increasingly took the form of a meditation on the role of the Charter in contemporary French society.

Ballanche undoubtedly spoke sincerely when he told Récamier in 1816 that “je ne suis point un écrivain politique”.³⁴ Yet, as Vaudon has noted, if Ballanche was not a partisan polemicist in the manner of Constant or Chateaubriand, he was nevertheless deeply concerned with fundamental questions of social order.³⁵ Ballanche wrote *Institutions*

³¹ Ballanche to Récamier, 5 February 1816, in Kettler, *Lettres de Ballanche à Madame Récamier*, 362.

³² Ballanche to Récamier, 14 March 1816, in Kettler, *Lettres de Ballanche à Madame Récamier*, 375–376. Compare Ballanche’s remarks on the function of the Chambers in *OC*, 2:78.

³³ Ballanche’s dilemma at this time is captured in J.-J. Ampère’s remark that the habits of Ballanche’s life inclined him toward the old, while the sympathies of his intelligence inclined him toward the new. Ampère, *Ballanche* (Paris: René, 1848), 62.

³⁴ Ballanche to Récamier, 30 September 1815, in Kettler, *Lettres de Ballanche à Madame Récamier*, 344.

³⁵ Jean Vaudon, “Ballanche: A Propos d’une oeuvre inédite” in *Le Correspondant* (25 October 1883): 258.

sociales in the conviction that an understanding of the true nature of society is the necessary prerequisite for the reconstruction of France. *Institutions sociales* sought to overcome the extremes of factionalism that bedeviled Restoration political debate by grounding it in a particular theory of the nature and purpose of society. As Loménie noted, “La question politique, si vivement débattue en 1818, entre les libéraux et les ultra-royalists, se transforme sous la plume de Ballanche en une question philosophique”.³⁶

That *Institutions sociales* did not come close to matching the popular success of *Antigone* may be attributed to the density and allusiveness of its argument, as well as to Ballanche’s reluctance to permit an extensive distribution of the work. Even Charles Nodier, with whom Ballanche would become close friends in the 1830s, had to admit, in his sympathetic review in the *Journal des Débats* (15 December 1818), that *Institutions sociales* was a difficult read. In fact, as A. M. Ampère attested, the book passed almost unnoticed except among Ballanche’s own circle:

L’ouvrage de Ballanche est peu lu, peu compris et ne peut être goûté que de ceux qui le comprennent. Il y a des gens assez sages pour avouer qu’ils ne peuvent s’élever à une telle métaphysique; d’autres jugent, quoiqu’ils n’y comprennent rien, et cela fait pitié.³⁷

Bredin refused to accept Ampère’s gloomy prognosis, insisting that the pure ideas of the work would triumph despite the apparent opposition brought against it by the rough and tumble of circumstances.³⁸ Not even Ballanche, however, fully shared Bredin’s optimism. Acknowledging the daunting aspect *Institutions sociales* presented prospective readers, Ballanche decided to write *Le Vieillard et le Jeune homme* as a “seconde exposition” of the ideas of *Institutions sociales*.³⁹ Here, stripped of the “métaphysique mystérieuse” of the foundations of the social order, Ballanche set forth his analysis of the condition of contemporary France in plain language.

The eponymous dramatis personae of *Le Vieillard et le jeune homme* are a young man who has despaired of the anti-religious social anarchy

³⁶ Louis de Loménie, “M. Ballanche” in *Galerie des hommes illustrés*, 10 vols. (Paris: René, 1840–1847), 2:33. Also quoted in Vaudon, 259.

³⁷ Ampère to Bredin, 21 December 1818, in *Correspondance du grand Ampère*, 2:545.

³⁸ Bredin to Ampère, 28 December 1818, *Lettres inédites de Claude-Julien Bredin*, 120.

³⁹ Ballanche, “Avant-Propos” to the first edition of *Le Vieillard et le jeune homme* (Paris: Didot, 1819).

of his age and an old man who reconciles him with the times by demonstrating that the apparent anarchy cloaks the irresistible and providential march of social progress. Despite its division into seven “Entretiens”, the work is not a dialogue as *Jeune* never speaks. Rather, in the manner of Fénelon’s *Télémaque*, *Le Vieillard et le jeune homme* is a set of monologues in which *le Vieillard*, in the role of Fénelon’s Mentor, summarizes the doctrines Ballanche had set forth in *Institutions sociales*. A. J. George has suggested that Ballanche modeled *Jeune* on Jean-Jacques Ampère, the son of his old friend André-Marie.⁴⁰ There may be something to this, but the young man’s condition so closely corresponds to the views of the young Ballanche of *Epopée Lyonnaise* and *Du Sentiment* that we may doubt that Ballanche required an external model. In any case, *Jeune* suffers from mal-du-siècle. D. G. Charlton has pointed out that the variety of the forms taken by this malady has not been sufficiently appreciated by scholars.⁴¹ Of this Romantic *topos* that stretches from Chateaubriand to Musset and beyond, *Le Vieillard et le jeune homme* registers its own particular *archéophile* variation. Yet whereas most Romantic *enfants du siècle* suffer from a divided self and are the heroes of quests for identity, Ballanche posits two principals and simply presents his conclusions as a series of sermons from one to the other. While this no doubt represents questionable literary judgement, we must understand that Ballanche’s intentions were less literary than evangelical.

The lack of popular recognition granted *Institutions sociales* and *Le Vieillard et le jeune homme* disheartened Ballanche:

Si écrire servait à quelque chose, j’aurais certainement beaucoup à écrire; mais je suis trop convaincu de l’inutilité, surtout quant à moi. Je suis trop inconnu et trop peu homme de parti. Autre obstacle: je me crois à la hauteur où les deux opinions se réunissent, comme la rène de droit et la rène de gauche se réunissent dans la main du cocheur, et je ne suis pas le cocheur.⁴²

Despite the pessimism of this note to Récamier, however, Ballanche did not stop writing; in fact, he very quickly wrote another political

⁴⁰ George, *Pierre-Simon Ballanche*, 75.

⁴¹ D. G. Charlton, “Prose Fiction” in *The French Romantics*, ed. D. G. Charlton, 2 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1984), 1:171. See also Pierre Barbéris, “Mal du siècle, ou d’un romantisme de droit à un romantisme de gauche” in *Romantisme et politique, 1815–1851* (Paris: Colin, 1969), 164–182.

⁴² Ballanche to Récamier, undated (ca. 1819 or 1820), in Kettler, *Lettres de Ballanche à Madame Récamier*, 474.

piece, *L'Homme sans nom*. Nevertheless, he hesitated to publish it and consigned the manuscript to a trunk when Chateaubriand disapproved of its content.⁴³ Then on 13 February 1820 the assassination of the duc de Berry by the Bonapartist Louis-Pierre Louvel shocked all France. Berry was the son of the comte d'Artois and nephew of the King; Ultras immediately identified Louvel's act as part of a massive Liberal conspiracy against the Restoration. Ballanche quickly composed a meditation on the assassination, the *Élégie* of 1820, in which he warned that excessive reaction would derail the delicate process of reconciliation. The bulk of the piece is a hymn of praise to the magnanimous and generous Bourbons, "la plus noble et la plus illustre" of dynasties.⁴⁴ It is only in the last few pages that Ballanche departs from what has hitherto been a typical royalist encomium in the manner of Chateaubriand's *Mémoires de la vie et de la mort du duc de Berry* (1820) to introduce the essential political and historical argument of the piece.

Convinced that it was his duty to publicize his political writings in order to help France through this dangerous time, Ballanche dusted off *L'Homme sans nom* and published it in 1820 together with the *Élégie*.⁴⁵ Wary, however, of inflaming public opinion at an explosive moment, Ballanche not only limited the press run to 100 copies, but also published anonymously. Whereas *Le Vieillard et le jeune homme* had been directed at a wide audience, Ballanche intended his new work as advice for the King and a small circle of political leaders. As Ballanche recalled in the preface to the second edition, he did not want his disinterested analysis used to fuel factional strife:

Ainsi je ne voulais livrer la pureté de ma pensée, et j'oserais dire la pudeur de mes sentiments, ni à des souvenirs implacables, ni à d'ombrageuses méfiances, ni à ces inquiétudes terribles qui agitaient en mille sens divers toutes les classes et tous les parties (*OC*, 3:157).⁴⁶

Ballanche had good reason to be cautious; not only did *Élégie* oppose the tidal wave of Ultra reaction, his eponymous "nameless man" was a regicide; that is, a member of the Convention Nationale

⁴³ George, *Pierre-Simon Ballanche*, 82.

⁴⁴ *OC*, 3:317.

⁴⁵ Paris: Didot, 1820. New edition, 1828, reprinted 1832.

⁴⁶ Cf. Ballanche's remark, in a manuscript dating from 1820: "S'il toujours du devoir d'un bon citoyen de dire ce qu'il croit être la vérité, il est quelquefois de son devoir de ne la dire seulement avec ménagement." "Réflexions", in Jean-René Derré, *Dossier de La Ville des Expiations de Ballanche* (Paris: CNRS, 1981), 97.

who had voted for the death of Louis XVI in 1793. There was no more emotional subject in the early years of the Restoration than the regicide. In choosing a regicide as the subject of *L'Homme sans nom*, Ballanche “pose, symboliquement, tout le problème de la Restauration”.⁴⁷

⁴⁷ Paul Bénichou, *Le Temps des prophètes* (Paris: Gallimard, 1977), 78.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE NATURE OF SOCIETY

Ballanche brought with him to Paris the manuscript in which he had commingled his political reflections with his ideas on poetry. Though he had hoped to publish the work before the opening of the Chamber returned by the elections of 20 September 1817, publication was delayed and it was only late the following year that it appeared under the title *Essai sur les Institutions sociales dans leur rapport avec les idées nouvelles*. All commentators who have discussed *Institutions sociales* have remarked on the difficulties it presents to the reader. Not only did Ballanche give full rein to his penchant for digression, exacerbated by the amalgam of a poetics and a politics, but he made very little effort to establish the basic principles on which his central argument rests. He begins instead *in media res* with the social crisis inaugurated by the Revolution, and proceeds to show how it was inevitable and what its end must be, given his largely implicit assumptions about the nature of society. Nevertheless, the underlying structure of the work is not difficult to discern; as satellite photography reveals the contours of the land beneath a tangle of vegetation, so the critical eye may cut through Ballanche's digressions and repetitions to discern the reasonably coherent theory of society that underlies all of his 1818–1820 works.

Basic assumptions about the nature of society

Institutions sociales rests on the notion that society and language are co-eval with humanity and jointly originate in a primitive revelation made by God to the human race. *Primitive* here does not signify rude, backward, uncivilized, as in the accounts of eighteenth-century travellers, nor does it carry connotations of Rousseau's "noble savage". Rather, primitive in Ballanche's vocabulary refers to the original condition of the human race immediately upon its creation when it was still close to God, perhaps even in direct contact with him. The entire post-lapsarian history of humanity represents the struggle to regain

the lost original harmony. All true religion finds its source in revelations made by God to primitive humanity. Traces of the original, "pure" revelation may be found in all the religions, mythologies, and languages of the world, if the searcher has sufficient skill to discern them. This notion is closely linked to the venerable *prisca theologia* tradition, to which Ballanche makes occasional reference in *Institutions sociales*.¹

Ballanche offers no real proof of the divine origin of society and language, contenting himself with the observation that the only other possibility, that society and language are human inventions, is absurd.² There can be no such thing, therefore, as a pre-social state; indeed, since morality and intelligence develop only in society, humanity is and can be fully human only within society: "Son intelligence, comme [l'homme] lui-même, . . . ne peut se développer que dans la société. Cette assertion est également vraie pour le sentiment moral".³ This is Ballanche's doctrine of solidarity, or the interdependence of human beings in their moral and intellectual development. Language is similarly necessary for the development of morality and intelligence because social life presupposes the possession of language. In fact, the social dimension of language is so important for the moral and intellectual development of humanity that Ballanche identifies language as the faculty by which humans exist as moral and intellectual beings: "La parole, qui est le sens social . . . , est, en même temps, le sens par lequel nous existons comme êtres moraux et comme êtres intelligents".⁴ The language of earliest times, however, was not the conventional language such is spoken today. Pre-lapsarian primitive language participated in the divine logos that created the universe; primitive words, consequently, rather than possessing a merely contingent association with the objects they signified, partook of the essence of the thing named.⁵

¹ Certain aspects of this notion of the primitive are discussed in Kenneth R. Stunkel, "India and the Idea of a Primitive Revelation in French Neo-Catholic Thought" in *Journal of Religious History* 8 (1975): 228-239.

² *OC*, 2:276. Cf. Bonald: "Sans doute, le moyen de la première transmission de la parole faite à l'homme nous est inconnu, et l'imagination n'en fournit aucune image; mais la raison conçoit et peut démontrer qu'il est impossible, c'est-à-dire contre la constitution physique et morale de l'homme, qu'il puisse inventer l'expression de ses pensées, car ce serait inventer son propre être intellectuel". Louis de Bonald, *Législation primitive* in *Oeuvres complètes*, 3 vols. (Paris: Migne, 1859), 1:1162 n. 1.

³ *OC*, 2:220-221.

⁴ *OC*, 2:226.

⁵ *OC*, 2:232. Ballanche observes that the "superstitions rabbiniques" of the

The conceptions of society and language in *Institutions sociales* closely follow the Traditionalist theories expressed most clearly by Louis de Bonald. In the chapter, “De la parole et de la société”, Ballanche cites Bonald’s *Législation primitive* (1802) and *Recherches philosophiques sur les premiers objets des connaissances morales* (1818). Further, many of Bonald’s ideas appear in the sections devoted to language in Maistre’s *Essai sur le principe générateur des constitutions politiques et des autres institutions humaines* (1814), a work also cited in *Institutions sociales*. Rejecting the rationalist contention that human beings possess an innate capacity for language, Bonald insists on the divine origin of language. Since the Fall, however, human beings receive language only indirectly through the mediation of another divinely-established institution, society. Humanity’s true nature, as signified by its creation in God’s image, is bound up in language. Society transmits language to individuals, thereby transmitting moral and religious truths. Bonald is quick to draw out the political consequences of this theory. Since the social order is the source of language, and through language of morality and religion, any disturbance in the social order will have catastrophic effects. The social upheavals of the French Revolution, Bonald argues, inevitably brought linguistic disorder, immorality, and irreligion.⁶ Given his admiration for Bonald’s ideas and his constant praise for Maistre, Ballanche’s acknowledgements of Bonald can only be described as parsimonious. A possible explanation lies in the fact that Bertille d’Avèze (of the “Fragments”) eventually married Bonald’s son.

Catholic Traditionalism, however, is not the sole source of Ballanche’s ideas on language. Bonald himself, and Maistre even more so, drew on illuminist theories of language, and Ballanche encountered this tradition directly in Antoine Fabre d’Olivet, whose works on the mystical significance of language generally and of Hebrew in particular (above all *La Langue hébraïque restituée* [1815–1816]) Ballanche greatly admired. Illuminist linguistics, prominent in the Romantic period thanks in no small part to Louis-Claude de Saint Martin and other

kabbalistic tetragrammaton are a debased survival of the potency of names in primitive language. *OC*, 2:237.

⁶ Frank Paul Bowman, “Occultism and the Language of Poetry” in *The Occult in Language and Literature*, ed. Hermione Riffaterre (New York: French Forum, 1980), 58–59. Bonald’s problematic relation to French romanticism in general is discussed in Gérard Gengembre, “Entre Archaisme et Modernité: Bonald, la Contre-Révolution et la Littérature” in *Revue d’histoire littéraire de la France* 90 (1990): 705–714.

disciples of Jakob Boehme, taught that behind the present cacophony of languages lies a single, primitive, language. This Adamic tongue enabled the first human beings not only to communicate freely among themselves but to participate in the divine speech that had created the universe. Primitive language was lost in the Fall, cutting off both direct communication with God and direct grasp of reality. A second linguistic fall, commemorated in the Genesis episode of the Tower of Babel, shattered the unity of the human race into the myriad languages of the world. Illuminist philosophers of language were convinced that the loss of the primitive language was not permanent; traces of it remain in one (usually Hebrew), or a few, historical languages. These traces might one day be assembled and the primitive language reconstructed, thereby overcoming Babel and restoring humanity to unity and direct communication with God.⁷ Ballanche usually muted his enthusiasm for Fabre d'Olivet's theories in his published works in recognition of Fabre's somewhat dubious reputation. It is significant, therefore, that Ballanche explicitly rates Fabre's ideas on language as superior to those of Bonald.⁸

Though Ballanche does not discuss the Fall in *Institutions sociales*, it is essential to realize that it underlies his reflections on the nature of society. At its birth, humanity enjoyed direct, harmonious contact with God, figuratively expressed by the garden of Eden. The Fall shattered the state of primitive bliss. Re-establishment of the lost harmony between humanity and God requires that humanity consciously choose this relation. And since the requirement of choice necessitates the freedom to make the wrong choice, humanity must acquire moral and intellectual responsibility as the precondition of rehabilitation.⁹ Responsibility is to be acquired in and through society. This is possible because post-lapsarian social order retains some vestiges of the power of primitive revelation. God, Ballanche assures us, did not abandon humanity after the Fall, but still communicates

⁷ George Steiner, *After Babel: Aspects of Language and Translation* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2nd edition, 1992), 57–63; Marguerite Iknayan, *The Concave Mirror: From Imitation to Expression in French Esthetic Theory 1800–1830* (Saratoga, CA: Anna Libri [Stanford French and Italian Studies], 1983), 85–86.

⁸ *OC*, 2:265–275.

⁹ Ballanche's version of the *felix culpa*, in the form of his doctrine of the identity of the fall and rehabilitation (*déchéance et rehabilitation*), becomes a central theme of the *Palingénésie sociale*. This formula appears once in *Institutions sociales*, but in the "Addition au Chapitre X" added by Ballanche for the *Oeuvres* edition and dating from 1830.

with us through the social order. Society, in fact, has been imposed on humanity by God precisely in order to effect its rehabilitation.

Individuals and classes must endure the restraints demanded by the social order or risk derailing the rehabilitatory process; hence, “[l]’état social est un état de souffrance”.¹⁰ That the social state is inescapably one of suffering is not the result of a flawed social order; the happiness of individuals is not the goal of society:

Songez donc à perfectionner l’homme plutôt qu’à le rendre heureux, car vous n’y parviendriez pas. Mais soignez le bonheur de la société, parceque la société n’existe que dans ce monde; l’homme qui vit au-delà peut attendre sa récompense. Faites que la société soit heureuse, et veillez à ce que l’homme accomplisse ses devoirs, soit docile aux épreuves qui lui sont imposées. Ceci n’est autre chose que la pensée chrétienne elle-même (*OC*, 2:415).

The well-being of society is far more important than individual happiness. In any case, true happiness is possible only with the rehabilitation of humanity, itself attainable only in and through society. “[T]out est souffrance pour le genre humain”¹¹ because God established this world as a place of suffering so that through *épreuves* (“trials” or “ordeals”) humanity might further its intellectual and moral development and thereby rehabilitate its nature. All suffering, in short, is expiatory: sometimes the innocent suffer, other times the guilty suffer, but all suffering equally contributes to the social progress by which humanity will ultimately be rehabilitated.

Though the need for expiation necessitates that the human condition is generally dolorous, suffering becomes particularly acute in ages of transition. Humanity is incessantly progressive; yet, progress is manifested only in certain ages of crisis, or epochs of end and renewal, during which an old social order dies and a new order is born.¹² Providence may sometimes resemble blind fate inasmuch as social progress inexorably destroys obsolete social orders. Yet, however

¹⁰ *OC*, 2:292.

¹¹ *OC*, 2:118–119.

¹² *OC*, 2:45. “Age(s) of crisis” is a translation of “âge(s) critique(s)”. Given the significance of the term “critical ages” as the opposite term to “organic ages” in the binary historiography of the Saint-Simonians, together with the undeniable influence of Ballanche on the Saint-Simonians (see Part Four below), it seems worthwhile to point out that in *Institutions sociales* “âges critiques” are ages in which an old order passes away and a new order is born, together with the trauma accompanying such an upheaval. Though rational corrosion of old beliefs may play a role in the destruction of the old order, it is neither an essential nor a necessary feature of such ages.

capricious the death of a particular society might appear from a limited human perspective, social transformations in fact follow divinely established laws.¹³ In these successive social transformations, civil privileges are gradually extended to successively lower classes by means of co-operation between the classes. Liberties are thus concessions granted a given class when it has proven that it has attained sufficient moral and intellectual maturity not to abuse its new liberties. It is by means of the evolution of social institutions that moral and intellectual development—that is, the acquisition of responsibility—occurs. Too rapid or too extensive an emancipation would be catastrophic as classes not yet sufficiently mature, and mistaking material gain for the goal of society, would use their liberties to overthrow the social order. The moral and intellectual development of humanity, possible only in (hierarchical) society, would thereby cease. The role of government is to restrain the premature, and therefore anti-social, extension of liberties to the masses by enforcing the hierarchical structure of society: “[L]e gouvernement étant destiné . . . à réprimer les erreurs de la volonté d’un peuple, il est nécessaire qu’il soit primitivement imposé à ce peuple comme les autres nécessités sociales”.¹⁴

Liberty is defined in *Institutions sociales* in relation to Ballanche’s Traditionalist theories of the nature of society and the principle of solidarity. Since society has been imposed on humanity by God as the necessary condition for its moral and intellectual development, any attempt to set the individual over society, or to withdraw from society, is not only anti-social, but anti-providential. The social order, through which the effects of the Fall are gradually overcome, is for Ballanche essentially an instrument of spiritual rehabilitation.¹⁵ Ballanche uses the image of initiation from the ancient mystery cults to explain social life: just as the cults demanded that their initiates undergo ordeals, so society demands that individuals undergo painful *épreuves* that, by shaking their complacency, bring out latent moral and intellectual faculties. Further, just as the mystery cults are structured according to a strict hierarchy in which it is forbidden to receive instruction above that commensurate with one’s rank, so in society each class possesses its appropriate privileges and any attempt to circumvent the slow expansion of privilege brings disaster.¹⁶ For

¹³ OC, 3:261.

¹⁴ OC, 2:297.

¹⁵ OC, 3:105.

¹⁶ OC, 2:71. Ballanche’s remark (2:211–212), to the effect that today only a small

Ballanche, as for Maistre and Bonald, the religious and the social are one and the same.

"*Moeurs*" and "*opinions*" are fundamental terms in *Institutions sociales*. Though Ballanche nowhere defines them, usage makes their meaning clear enough. *Moeurs* signifies morality, understood as behaviour sanctified by custom and religion; it is conservative and social, and particular to a given society. *Opinion* does not signify unfounded belief in the sense of the platonic *doxa*; rather, it pertains to the activity of the intellect. A possible translation is "thought", but Ballanche tends to use "*pensée*", especially in the phrase "*émancipation de la pensée*", when he wants to signify the act of thinking. *Opinions*, then, are the ideas produced by the act of thinking. Whether or not they are ultimately true or false, *opinions* tend toward individualism and universality. I shall translate *opinions* as "opinions" in order to avoid awkward paraphrase, though the reader must bear in mind that the term signifies products of the act of thinking, not false beliefs. Ballanche may well have derived his distinction between *moeurs* and *opinions* from Bonald, who similarly contrasts "*sentiments*" and "*opinions*" in *Théorie du pouvoir* (1796).¹⁷

In terms of the complexes of concepts symbolized by expiation and progress, *Institutions sociales* identifies the successive social transformations as the visible manifestation of the rehabilitation of the human race from the effects of the Fall. Progress, absent from the Lyon works, now occupies a central place in Ballanche's thought. Suffering, in the form of ages of crisis, contributes to, indeed is necessary for, the operation of social progress.

The law of religious equality

In *Institutions sociales*, Ballanche identifies two critical moments in the history of the rehabilitation of the human race: the emancipation of morality, and the emancipation of thought. These two emancipations correspond to, respectively, the advent of Christianity and the post-French Revolutionary era. Though Ballanche has little to say in the 1818–1820 works about pre-Christian times, he does remark, thinking

number of faithful Pythagoreans (an allusion, surely, to Fabre d'Olivet) have kept these truths alive, suggests that he considers initiation to be more than just a metaphor, and foreshadows the centrality of initiation to *Palingénésie sociale*.

¹⁷ Bonald, *Théorie du pouvoir* in *Oeuvres complètes*, 3 vols. (Paris: Migne, 1859), 1:470.

of Greek (and possibly Hindu) polytheism, that the age preceding the coming of Christianity had been “celui de l’empire absolu de l’imagination”.¹⁸ Ballanche notes that such religions were morally deficient inasmuch as their stories of the gods’ dissolute behaviour separated morality from religion.¹⁹ He argues that the establishment of schools of philosophy, which made it their duty to struggle against the aberrations of the imagination and the seductions of the senses of contemporary religion by establishing morality through the exercise of reason, shows that the moral deficiency of polytheism was recognized in ancient times. Unfortunately, many of these philosophic schools, in opposing the errors of the religious imagination, denounced religion altogether and re-established morality only at the expense of religious sentiment. Ballanche depicts the religious and moral life of antiquity as having suffered from a double schism: its popular religion separated morality from religion so that its religious institutions no longer preserved morality, while its philosophy divorced religious sentiment from morality.²⁰ Ballanche softens his condemnation of ancient religion and philosophy by conceding that not all pagan philosophers rejected religious sentiment as the basis of morality. In fact, by comparing the afterworld scenes in the *Odyssey* with those of the *Aeneid*, *The Dream of Scipio*, and finally Plutarch’s *Traité des Délais de la Justice divine*,²¹ Ballanche traces “les progrès des idées morales chez les païens”.²² All other pagan philosophies, however, pale for Ballanche beside platonism, whose assimilation of humanity to God by making humanity participate, intellectually and morally, in the divine, reconciled religion and morality in a manner that foreshadowed the truths of Christianity. Hence, Ballanche calls platonism “une here-use préparation à la religion de Jésus-Christ”; through platonism the Gentiles, no less than the Jews, received the promise and knew the precursors of Christianity.²³

¹⁸ *OC*, 2:181.

¹⁹ This charge reflects a venerable Christian tradition of professed shock at the immorality of Greek myths. Yet, in other moods, and indeed most commonly, Ballanche maintains that all myths are allegories that, correctly interpreted, yield truth (*OC*, 2:282, for example). Ballanche has borrowed from two distinct mythographic traditions and failed to integrate them sufficiently. For a discussion of Christian attitudes toward pagan mythology, see Jean Seznec, *The Survival of the Pagan Gods*, trans. Barbara Sessions (Princeton: Bollingen/Princeton UP, 1953).

²⁰ *OC*, 2:134.

²¹ On which Maistre had just published a commentary (Lyon: Rusand, 1816).

²² *OC*, 2:57.

²³ *OC*, 2:57, 328–329.

Yet even platonism, because it reached only a tiny educated elite, was incapable of reconciling morality and opinions in ancient society as a whole. It was precisely in order to effect this comprehensive reconciliation that Christianity came into the world. Christianity was able to reconcile morality and opinions because it is founded on morality.²⁴ That is, it removed religion from the realm of the imagination and re-established the identity between religious sentiment and morality, while at the same time refuting those philosophers who had attempted to establish morality independently of religion. And it was accessible to all as it required no special education. Hence Ballanche's often repeated slogan: "l'âge de l'établissement du christianisme fut pour le genre humain l'âge de l'émancipation morale".²⁵ The reconciliation of religion and morality established by Christianity constituted a momentous step forward in the social evolution of humanity. Christ, as the sole legitimate legislator of Christian societies, established the principle that Christian societies are founded on the law of religious equality (all are equal in Christ). Since, for Ballanche, the religious equals the social, true religion must yield the perfect society. Nevertheless, though he maintains that any law not rooted in the spirit of Christianity must necessarily be an anti-social law,²⁶ Ballanche does not advocate theocracy because he does not wish priests to control society.²⁷ Rather, his identification of the religious and social spheres dissolves all civil questions into religious ones.

Christianity also marks a transformation in the manner of social change. In ancient times, Ballanche tells us, it was common practice for kings to be killed by their subjects when the time was ripe for social progress because peoples could express their needs only through violence. Hence kings, "victimes augustes", died with the expiring social order they represented.²⁸ Christianity rendered such bloody sacrifices unnecessary by substituting fraternal cooperation based on the law of religious equality for violence as the instrument of social transformation. Unexpectedly, in his discussion of the consequences of the emancipation of thought in the sphere of religious ideas, Ballanche offers a spirited defence of the eucharistic doctrine of the real presence:

²⁴ *OC*, 2:134.

²⁵ *OC*, 2:181.

²⁶ *OC*, 2:79.

²⁷ In fact, in *Le Vieillard et le jeune homme* Ballanche observes that priests have lagged behind the progress of French society as a whole. *OC*, 3:90.

²⁸ *OC*, 2:86–87.

Le sacrifice de l'amour ne peut être ni un symbole ni une commémoration; c'est le grand mystère de la parole. Une parole, mais c'est la parole même de Dieu, une parole rend la victime présente pour être immolée de nouveau. Ce pain est la chair, ce vin est du sang, la chair et le sang de la victime auguste (*OC*, 2:364).

This passage, unique in its treatment of a strictly theological matter, relates to Ballanche's demonstration that while primitive language no longer has a role to play in political institutions, it is still, and will always be, present in religion. Its interest for the present study, however, lies in its description of Christ as the "victime auguste", the very phrase Ballanche uses to signify the ancient kings killed by their subjects. Ballanche, in fact, seems to suggest that Christ may be considered the last and greatest of the ancient kings. Christ inaugurates the new order, yet not, as in orthodox Christian teaching, by his death as the sole and sufficient atonement for human sin. Rather, Christ's teaching of the principle of religious equality establishes a new religious order, the providentially-directed progressive extension of which into the social and political realms furthers, and will ultimately complete, the rehabilitation of humanity. One may ask whether Christ had to die in order to establish the principle of religious equality. Christ's death does not appear to have added anything to this principle and must be considered to have been superfluous. We shall return to this point below.

Political liberty, Ballanche tells his readers, is only an image of moral, that is, Christian, liberty.²⁹ Yet, though civil liberty is the necessary consequence of Jesus' teaching, Christian liberty did not beget civil liberty immediately. Rather, in accordance with the providential decree that social progress must occur slowly so as not to destabilize society and thereby halt the process of rehabilitation itself, religious liberty is extended into the civil realm only over the course of centuries. In fact, the culmination of the gradual extension of religious liberty into civil society, the second great emancipation of the human race, is taking place only now, and nowhere more significantly than in France (see Chapter Six).

²⁹ *OC*, 2:535. While only in later works does Ballanche explicitly identify civil equality as the evolution of Christian equality, the notion is implicit in *Institutions sociales*. (The passage in *OC*, 2:6 making the relation explicit was added in 1830.)

Legitimism

Ballanche believes that the principle of legitimism, though its origins are veiled in mystery, has been established by providence and is inseparable from Christianity.³⁰ Dynasties, however, must represent the providential mission of their times if they are to be legitimate; that is, they must embody the particular stage of social progress attained by the societies they govern. Christian dynasties have played, and continue to play, a crucial role in history. In the past, they introduced Christianity into their realms, thereby exposing their peoples to the law of religious equality. Later, they established and now maintain a principle of social continuity that protects their societies against too rapid change.³¹

Since the mission of modern society, according to Ballanche, is to complete the extension of the Christian principle of religious equality into the civil realm, modern dynasties, including the French Bourbons, must embody this social transformation or forfeit their legitimacy. Ballanche hails Fénelon as having been the first to grasp the historical task of the modern age.³² François de Salignac La Mothe-Fénelon was the tutor of the young duc de Bourgogne, grandson of Louis XIV and heir apparent in 1711–1712. In his *Télémaque* (1699), written to instruct his royal charge, Fénelon denounced royal absolutism, arguing that evil arises from monarchs who ignore the well-being of their peoples. Ballanche here generalizes Fénelon's advice to his pupil by identifying it with his own version of the duties of ruling dynasties.

Le sentiment de l'humanité . . . , ce que Cicéron appelait *humani generis caritas*, est un sentiment tout-à-fait nouveau dans l'application. Il resta long-temps une théorie spéculative que les esprits distraits ou affirmatifs ne regardaient que comme un rêve. Fénelon, le premier, a cru que de la théorie on pouvait parvenir à la pratique. Considéré sous ce point de vue, le *Télémaque* a eu une très grande influence sur la société (OC, 3:277–278).

There are several references to Fénelon in *Du Sentiment*. In this early work, however, Ballanche was not interested in Fénelon's political ideas; rather, he admired Fénelon as a model of spirituality and aesthetics, praising his fusion of classical sensibility and Christian

³⁰ OC, 2:27–28.

³¹ OC, 2:27.

³² OC, 3:178.

morality. The dominant text here is not *Télémaque*, but *Réflexions sur la grammaire, la rhétorique et la poétique* (1716); even when Ballanche cites *Télémaque*, he does so for its aesthetic and spiritual, not political, value.³³ While, then, Restoration France rediscovered Fénelon the great Catholic apologist, Ballanche had always loved this aspect of the bishop of Cambrai and now discovered Fénelon the political theorist.

Ballanche attributes the regrettable failure of France's ruling house to heed Fénelon's advice to Louis XIV's love of absolutism, which blinded him to the merits of Fénelon's proposals. Instead of honouring him and implementing his ideas, the Roi-Soleil disgraced and banished him. The death of Fénelon's pupil, the duc de Bourgogne, before he could ascend the throne prevented the enactment of his mentor's ideas. Louis XV, finally, was either unwilling or unable to do so.³⁴ Thus the Bourbon dynasty, up to the death of Louis XV, refused to renounce royal absolutism and recognize the needs of modern society. Ballanche, let us note, does not condemn Louis XIV's absolutism as despotic.³⁵ Absolutism is not evil in itself; rather, Ballanche's argument is that while royal absolutism was legitimate in earlier centuries the advance of society has made it obsolete. The Bourbons' refusal to renounce absolutism marks them as anachronistically out of step with the providential direction of French society.

Ballanche identifies the accession of Louis XVI as a watershed in the career of the dynasty. Louis XVI was the first king not only to accept Fénelon's arguments, but to feel in his soul the direct inspiration of Fénelon: "Jamais roi ne fut plus que lui dévoré de l'amour de l'humanité. Pour la première fois, ce sentiment descendit du trône pour arriver dans les plus basses classes de la société".³⁶ Louis XVI realized that social transformation was required to match the growing political maturity of France. Understanding that social transformation must be effected gradually, he set about guiding the country slowly but surely toward constitutional rule and increased liberty.

³³ See Ballanche, *Du Sentiment*, 175, 182, 212–213, 237, 327.

³⁴ *OC*, 3:280–281.

³⁵ *OC*, 2:213.

³⁶ *OC*, 3:281. "Le Louis XVI de Ballanche est un nouveau duc de Bourgogne, une créature de Fénelon." Mona Ozouf, "L'idée et l'image du régicide dans la pensée contre-révolutionnaire: l'originalité de Ballanche" in *Résistances à la Révolution* (Paris: Imago, 1987), 336. An edition of *Télémaque* was actually prepared by the royal presses for the education of the child who would have reigned as Louis XVII. Frank E. and Fritzie P. Manuel, *Utopian Thought in the Western World* (Cambridge: Harvard UP, Belknap, 1979), 384.

Ballanche provides an extensive chronological list of Louis XVI's edicts, ordinances, and declarations that purports to demonstrate that under Louis XVI France had indeed begun to acquire the liberties commensurate with the new stage of social evolution. The list includes measures relating to the reform of finance, taxation, military and clerical rights, agriculture, and public works.³⁷ Ballanche considers three of Louis' acts to be of particular importance because they "annoncent un pas immense dans les idées de la civilisation et l'affranchissement des peuples".³⁸ These three acts are the July 1778 establishment of Provincial Assemblies with responsibilities for local affairs, the August 1779 abolition of serfdom and of the right of mortmain in the royal domains, and the January 1781 precedent of the public disclosure of State finances. By these three measures, Ballanche declares, Louis gave his people "les premiers rudiments de l'éducation constitutionnelle".³⁹ Ballanche is careful to stress that none of Louis' reforms were forced on him; they arose spontaneously from his Fénelonian love of his people. He assures us no fewer than three times that Louis XVI marched in step with the society he ruled.⁴⁰

Mona Ozouf has emphasized the importance of Ballanche's depiction of Louis XVI as a *roi-législateur*, and contrasted this active, constituting conception of the monarchy with Bonald's *roi-législateur* who merely maintains and conserves the traditional social order.⁴¹ Though she is correct to note the forward-looking character of Ballanche's *roi-législateur* in relation to the Bonaldian conception, Ozouf over-emphasizes its active nature. Ballanche's *roi-législateur* does not bring about social progress by his edicts, he merely grants formal recognition to what the providential direction of society has already effected. Though modern dynasties must keep pace with their societies, they do not set the pace. In *Le Vieillard et le jeune homme*, Ballanche re-asserts the doctrine that a sovereign must reign in accordance with the needs of his people or lose divine sanction for his reign: "Une des conditions que l'Auteur de tout pouvoir a mise à l'intronisation d'un chef de dynastie, c'est le consentement des peuples".⁴² By popular

³⁷ OC, 2:284–288.

³⁸ OC, 3:287.

³⁹ OC, 3:288.

⁴⁰ OC, 3:283, 289, 294.

⁴¹ Ozouf, "L'idée et l'image du régicide", 336.

⁴² OC, 3:30. Ballanche claims Bossuet's approval for his notion of popular consent legitimizing dynasties in OC, 2:298. Ballanche is referring, loosely, to *Politics Drawn from the Very Words of Holy Scripture* (1709), Book II, First Article, 4th Proposition.

consent, however, Ballanche does not mean the wishes of the people, nor is it reached by means of plebiscites or representative votes. Rather, popular consent "repose, silencieuse et inattaquable, dans cette unité morale que forme une nation".⁴³ Ballanche's point becomes clear if we recall his distinction between morality and opinions. Elections tap only opinions, and are subject to the fluctuations of intellectual fashion;⁴⁴ true morality exists at a deeper level, below consciousness, and progresses slowly, in step with the gradual pace of providence. When Ballanche states that a king must rule in accord with the needs of his people, he means that he must embody the providential direction of society, rather than the conscious opinions of his people. Ballanche, somewhat disingenuously, declares that in this sense "la voix du peuple est la voix de Dieu".⁴⁵ This idiosyncratic use of the vox populi, vox dei tag inverts its usual sense as it precisely does not give power to the people, but asserts that the rulers know better than the people what the people's best interests truly are. For this reason, I think that Arlette Michel overestimates the active nature of Ballanche's notion of popular consent.⁴⁶

Ballanche further clarifies his view of divine right by contrasting legitimacy to heredity. Heredity is based on utility; that is, it is a political device designed to prevent chaotic interregnums by clearly designating a successor. Legitimacy demands that a dynasty govern in accordance with the providential direction of society. A sovereign who breaks with the providential direction of society forfeits his legitimacy and becomes an oppressor. Tyranny, reciprocally, is for Ballanche the imposition of an anti-providential path on a people, even if it is a path desired by the people itself. In *L'Homme sans nom*, Ballanche argues that his notion of divine right provides a much surer safeguard against tyranny than the Revolutionaries' conception of popular sovereignty. After first repeating the charge from *Le Vieillard et le jeune homme* that universal franchise can only result in the oppression of the minority by the majority, Ballanche introduces a more sophisticated refutation of popular sovereignty based on a redefinition of the very notion of the general will (*volonté générale*). In effect, Ballanche

⁴³ OC, 3:31.

⁴⁴ Hence, the dangers of democracy. OC, 2:143. Ballanche always associates democracy with the Terror.

⁴⁵ OC, 3:32.

⁴⁶ Ballanche, *Le Vieillard et le jeune homme*, presentation et notes par Arlette Michel (Paris: Garnier, 1981), 28, 115 n. 29.

recasts his notion of divine right in Rousseauian language. The true general will of a society is *not* what its members consciously think is best for them. We recall that elections, or any other means of canvassing the views of the public, tap into opinions only, where factional chaos obscures the gradual evolution of society under the direction of providence. This being so, the true general will desires rather that which accords with the providential direction of society at a given historical moment.⁴⁷ Since Ballanche's conception of divine right states that a legitimate dynasty represents the providential evolution of the society it rules, Ballanche's general will is equivalent to divine right. A legitimate dynasty is the locus of the general will of the society it governs.

Although social progress is fundamental to Ballanche's notion of divine right, his conception of liberty remains intensely conservative because it establishes that rulers know better than their peoples what is truly in the peoples' best interests. It is for this reason that I think Ozouf overstates her point when she declares: "c'est cette idée d'un consentement collectif à l'autorité royale où se creuse un peu plus encore la distance de Ballanche à Maistre".⁴⁸ Ozouf fails to recognize how thoroughly Ballanche's assimilation of the notion of general will to that of divine right has drained it of any Rousseauian populism. Ballanche's acceptance of social progress really does separate him from Maistre, but the distance is decreased, not increased, by his interpretation of the general will. Paul Bénichou, however, goes too far in the opposite direction when he states that Ballanche "n'a jamais répudié les principes fondamentaux de la sociologie contre-révolutionnaire".⁴⁹ Although he concedes that Ballanche sought a politics of reconciliation and modified his "counterrevolutionary sociology" by "la loi de temps", Bénichou insists that Ballanche never doubted the divine right of kings and observes that for Ballanche even the fall of kings is based on their divine right. This is all true, of course, but it is important to remember that the progressivism built into Ballanche's notion of divine right appalled Maistre and Bonald, the founders of the counter-revolutionary sociology. Arlette Michel similarly errs when she identifies Ballanche's notion of *volonté générale* with Bonald's retooling of Rousseau's term in *Théorie du pouvoir*.⁵⁰

⁴⁷ OC, 3:297–298.

⁴⁸ Ozouf, "L'idée et l'image du régicide", 335.

⁴⁹ Paul Bénichou, *Le Temps des prophètes* (Paris: Gallimard, 1977), 79.

⁵⁰ Ballanche, *Le Vieillard et le jeune homme*, éd. Michel, 27, 113 n. 29.

Though Ballanche undoubtedly knew this passage from Bonald, Michel, in identifying their notions of general will, does not take sufficient note of Ballanche's progressivism vis-à-vis Bonald's absolutism. The true nature of Ballanche's understanding of divine right lies between the interpretations offered by Ozouf and Bénichou. Contra Bénichou, Ballanche's conception contains a notion of progress that separates him from the counter-revolutionary theorists, yet, contra Ozouf, it remains intensely conservative owing to its rejection of any sort of genuine populism.

CHAPTER SIX

THE CONTEMPORARY AGE OF CRISIS

In this chapter, I examine how the Ballanche of the 1818–1820 works applied his basic assumptions about the nature of society to the contemporary history of Revolution and Restoration, while indicating any shifts in the complexes of terms symbolized by expiation and progress.

Just as Ballanche identified the age of the advent of Christianity as an age of crisis in which old religious and social ideas and structures were replaced by new ones, so he reads the contemporary period of social unrest inaugurated by the Revolution as another age of crisis, one that heralds the “*émancipation de la pensée par l’affranchissement des liens de la parole*”.¹ Hitherto, human thought has been severely limited by the restrictions placed on it by the need to preserve the rigidly hierarchical social order that alone could effect the progressive rehabilitation of humanity.² Nevertheless, as the Christian principle of religious equality has been gradually extended into the social realm, more and more of the population have gained civil liberties as they have been successively introduced into the duties and privileges of civilization. In each such extension, another segment of the population comes to understand the rehabilitory mission of society and is thus less likely to abuse thought through rationalist or libertarian attacks against the social order. Society has correspondingly begun to cast aside its repressive function and permit greater liberty of thought. Now the time has come to complete the emancipation of thought and extend the law of religious equality into all areas of the civil sphere.

The contemporary emancipation of thought, Ballanche hastens to add, does not mean that the old order of things has no place in the new social order; in fact, the new order must be founded on the very traditions it replaces. That is, society could not exist at all if it lost the principle of its divine nature and origin.³ It is therefore essential

¹ *OC*, 2:181.

² *OC*, 2:195.

³ *OC*, 2:196.

to resist the temptation to anticipate providence by constructing a social order *de novo*, by the light of newly freed human reason. Laws are never made, Ballanche cautions, echoing Maistre, they promulgate themselves; constitutions cannot be constructed *a priori*, they simply exist.⁴ Social institutions are the daughters of time, and time (read providence) alone can truly interpret God's will: "la marche progressive de l'esprit humain est indépendante de l'homme même . . . lorsque l'homme veut hâter par la violence, aussi bien que lorsqu'il veut y apporter des délais et des obstacles, il met toujours la société en péril".⁵ *Institutions sociales* here closely reproduces Ballanche's reaction to the political life of the early Restoration as recorded in his letters to Récamier.⁶

Had French society been permitted to progress gradually, morality would have evolved in step with the extension of liberties, and there would have been no separation between morality and opinions.⁷ Unfortunately, the progressive extension of liberties went awry in France, an occurrence for which the French have paid dearly. Ages of crisis are always traumatic for those who must live through them because the old order crumbles before the new order is established, producing moral and intellectual confusion for both individuals and society as a whole.⁸ The current crisis, however, is especially traumatic because to the necessary uncertainty accompanying the emancipation of thought has been added a purely contingent crisis caused by a general unwillingness to wait patiently for time to do its work of reform. Though Ballanche himself does not explicitly distinguish between the necessary and contingent aspects of the current crisis, the distinction is implicit throughout *Institutions sociales*, as the following pages will show, and acknowledgement of it will clarify Ballanche's thinking on this matter.

⁴ *OC*, 2:75–77. While these notions clearly derive from Maistre, Ballanche might have received confirmation on the last point from Benjamin Constant: "Time, says Bacon, is the great reformer. Do not refuse its assistance. Let it march in front of you; it will smooth your path. If what you establish has not been prepared by it, you will command in vain". Constant, *De l'esprit de conquête et de l'usurpation*, trans. Biancamaria Fontana in Constant, *Political Writings* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1988), 151.

⁵ *OC*, 2:91.

⁶ Compare the two previous citations with Ballanche to Récamier, 14 March 1816, in Agnès Kettler, *Lettres de Ballanche à Madame Récamier, 1812–1845* (Paris: Champion, 1996), 375–376.

⁷ *OC*, 2:156.

⁸ *OC*, 2:119.

Revolution

Ballanche attributes the French Revolution to the political theorists and politicians of the eighteenth century who sought to hasten the process of social transformation by appealing to the self-interest of the lower classes through the ideas of social equality, redistribution of property, and attacks against the Church. Sans-culottes, unaware of the providential nature of hierarchical society, seized on these ideas and violently forced them on France. Hence the Revolution, “une révolution faite par les hommes”, usurped the place of providential evolution, “une révolution faite par le temps”.⁹ Ballanche’s distinction between the two sorts of revolution reflects the polyvalency of the term in contemporary usage. His notion of a “révolution faite par les hommes” echoes the use, already well established by 1789, of *révolution* as change and disorder, especially a disruption in the socio-political order, while his “révolution faite par le temps” approximates the usage of Enlightenment thinkers for whom *révolution* signified a progressive cultural transformation of civil society.¹⁰ In this sense, *Institutions sociales* may, surprisingly, be located in the same tradition of cultural progress as Voltaire’s *Essai sur les mœurs* (1756) and Condorcet’s *Esquisse d’un tableau historique des progrès de l’esprit humain* (1794).

Ballanche’s Louis XVI, the ideal Fénelonian monarch, recognized that social transformation was needed to realign French institutions with the stage of social evolution attained by the nation. Louis, in fact, desired, and was in the process of enshrining in law and custom, the very liberties sought by the Revolution; only what the Revolutionaries pursued by the illicit path of violence, Louis had sought by the licit path of gradual reform. “Illustres partisans de la liberté, Louis XVI vous a tous précédés”.¹¹ When the nobles and parlementaires who composed the Assembly of Notables refused to assent to his reforms, the King, “dévoté de l’amour de son peuple”, convoked the Estates-General. One would have wished, Ballanche remarks, that Louis had had the strength of character to have proceeded with his reforms without the cooperation of the Estates-General.¹² Further,

⁹ *OC*, 2:149. See also 2:92.

¹⁰ On the various meanings of *révolution* in late eighteenth-century discourse, see Keith M. Baker, “Inventing the French Revolution” in *Inventing the French Revolution* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1990), 203–223.

¹¹ *OC*, 3:294–295.

¹² Ballanche suggests that a contributing cause of Louis’ downfall was that the kind-hearted king valued the opinion of his subjects too much. *OC*, 3:290.

once the Estates-General had been summoned, Louis made the great mistake of not having a firm program prepared for his opening address (read by Jacques Necker). Ballanche suggests that had Louis presented the delegates with an anticipation of the Charter of 1814, the principles of which, he has no doubt, Louis XVI embodied in 1789, the delegates would have accepted his proposal joyfully. However, in the absence of such a document, the delegates fell prey to the passions of the day and the false social doctrines of the philosophers, with the all too well-known consequences that culminated in the execution of the King.

While the operation of social progress formerly demanded that a king die when the social order he represents is about to yield to a new social order, the advent of Christianity replaced violent change with gradual, co-operative, providentially-guided reform. Dynasties that fail to advance with their societies must be overthrown, but there is no longer any need for kings to be killed.¹³ Moreover, Louis XVI, the pupil of Fénelon, embodied progressivism and was actively inaugurating the new social order when the outbreak of Revolution interrupted his work. The execution of Louis XVI represents a regression to pre-Christian, and hence anti-social, customs. The regicide, therefore, was a tragic anachronism attributable to the Revolutionaries' rejection of providence. In fact, it was doubly anachronistic: generally so because kings no longer need to be killed when dynasties change, and particularly so because Louis' progressivism meant that there was no need for him to be deposed at all. In language directly echoing *Antigone*, Ballanche speaks of the death of the King as "le grand sacrifice de Louis XVI".¹⁴ Yet, while he still abhors the deed, it is a measure of the extent to which Ballanche has modified his political stance since 1814 that in the 1818–1820 works he judges the regicide a tragic anachronism rather than a monstrous crime.

Bonaparte, in Ballanche's view, maintained, even extended, the anachronistic and anti-providential nature of the Revolution. In numerous passages in which he takes up the contrast between Bonaparte and Louis XVIII first enunciated in the manuscripts discussed in Chapter Three, Ballanche describes Bonaparte as having put himself

¹³ Mona Ozouf overlooks this point when she states that "[les] rois sont donc promis à la mort violente, qui consacre la mutation sociale". "L'idée et l'image du régicide dans la pensée contre-révolutionnaire: l'originalité de Ballanche" in *Résistances à la Révolution* (Paris: Imago, 1987), 332.

¹⁴ *OC*, 2:38.

“à la tête de la révolution faite par les hommes”.¹⁵ Further, in attempting to impose his despotism on Europe through violence, Bonaparte, “l’homme le plus antique des temps modernes”, tried to force the human race to regress to pre-Christian times.¹⁶ God, however, withdrew Bonaparte’s power before he could accomplish his design, thereby revealing that “Bonaparte ne fut qu’un auxiliaire du temps, pour hâter la destruction”.¹⁷

In what we may call Ballanche’s historical model, in which the rehabilitation of the human race is embodied in successive social transformations, the death of Louis XVI was not necessary. Yet, from another perspective, which we may call Ballanche’s expiatory model, Louis’ death represents the necessary immolation of an innocent victim in atonement for the crimes of France. Louis’ scaffold becomes “l’autel expiatoire d’une nouvelle religion sociale”, and Louis himself “la victime mystique d’une transformation sociale”.¹⁸ In *L’Homme sans nom*, Ballanche suggests that Louis XVI, though personally innocent, was condemned to death by God in order to save France, just as Christ was condemned to save humanity. “Dieu peut-être avait condamné [Louis XVI] pour le salut de la France qu’il aime. Ce Dieu n’avait-il pas voulu que son Fils payât la dette de l’humanité? Le roi a racheté la France comme Jésus-Christ a racheté le genre humain.”¹⁹ The historical model, grounded in Ballanche’s theories of the providential mission of dynasties and divine right, clearly reflects the historically-mediated rehabilitation of humanity via social progress that Ballanche introduces in *Institutions sociales*. The expiatory model suggests that suffering is somehow necessary for the operation of social progress. While, then, Ballanche’s two complexes of explanations are present in his analysis of the Revolution, he has not yet worked out the relation between them. Instead of merging the two complexes in a unified philosophy of history, the 1818–1820 works simply add the model of rehabilitation by expiation to the historical model.

Ballanche seems untroubled by what appears to be a contradiction between the two models: was the death of Louis XVI an unne-

¹⁵ OC, 2:26. In 1815 Ballanche published a short article on Bonaparte, which he incorporated into *Institutions sociales*. Ballanche, “L’Homme du destin” in *Mémorial religieux, politique et littéraire* (21 December 1815): 448.

¹⁶ OC, 2:81, 177–178.

¹⁷ OC, 2:68.

¹⁸ OC, 3:275–276.

¹⁹ OC, 3:263–264.

essary anachronism or a necessary expiatory sacrifice? Bénichou conflates the two models of rehabilitation, and so does not see any contradiction between them, when he links Louis' death as a sacrificial victim to the fact that "on ne peut douter que, pour Ballanche, Louis XVI n'incarne une société condamnée". Since the future requires the immolation of the past, he argues, "on comprend maintenant que le sacrifice du juste est la rançon qui libère l'avenir du passé".²⁰ Bénichou's identification of expiation with progress, anticipating the synthesis achieved in *Palingénésie sociale*, distorts the matter of Louis' death in the works under discussion here because Ballanche insists time and time again that Louis XVI did *not* incarnate a condemned society, but that, on the contrary, he embodied the progressive direction of his century. Bénichou, however, raises an interesting point when he assimilates Louis XVI to Christ. Ballanche does indeed assert that Louis' immolation as a holy sacrificial victim redeemed France just as the immolation of Christ as a holy sacrifice redeemed humanity. Yet, far from clinching Bénichou's position, the Louis-Christ identity confirms the ambiguity in Ballanche's thought at this date because Ballanche is no clearer on the necessity of Christ's death than of Louis' death. Christ's death, as we have seen, seems superfluous to his bringing into the world the epochal principle of religious equality. Moreover, Christ's atonement is insufficient historically, inasmuch as the providentially-guided march of social progress, which gradually extends the principle of religious equality into the civil realm, extracts a further measure of suffering during each age of end and renewal. Despite Christ's death, each age must expiate its share of original sin and thereby produce, in a sense, its own Christs. Louis XVI is the Christ of the Revolutionary age. Ballanche's ambiguity over Louis' death is an extension of his ambiguity over Christ's death.

While Mona Ozouf recognizes that Ballanche's attitude toward Louis is problematic, she misrepresents the problem by contrasting Louis the reformer in step with his century with Louis the wavering, timorous monarch incapable of executing his reforms, and then aligning Louis' timidity with Ballanche's doctrine that a dynasty that has lost its mission must die.²¹ This reading turns *L'Homme sans nom* into a Greek tragedy: Louis, doomed by the gods, can only play out the

²⁰ Paul Bénichou, *Le Temps des prophètes* (Paris: Gallimard, 1977), 77.

²¹ Ozouf, "L'idée et l'image du régicide", 337.

fate of his house (“those whom the gods wish to destroy, they first make regressive”). Ozouf here perpetuates Bénichou’s erroneous identification of Louis XVI with the dying social order. And while Ozouf corrects Bénichou to the extent that she recognizes an ambiguity in Ballanche’s treatment of Louis XVI, the real ambiguity is not whether or not Louis lost his zeal for reform, as Ballanche is adamant that he did not, but whether his death was an unnecessary anachronism or a necessary expiatory sacrifice.

Ballanche’s emphasis on the importance of suffering for social progress mitigates the contrast between the historical and expiatory models and suggests a relation between progress and expiation. Ballanche insists time and time again that terrestrial happiness is not possible, nor even desirable, because society has been imposed on humanity in order to effect its rehabilitation through ordeals (*épreuves*). Suffering, moreover, is particularly intense in ages of crisis, so even without the Revolution a series of ordeals would have been necessary in order to effect the transition to the new social order. Expiatory suffering, therefore, is integral to the historical model of social progress. Is, then, Louis’ death nothing more than an instance of the suffering that must inevitably accompany the current age of crisis? The answer is no, because Louis’ death was not absolutely necessary. Had the gradual pace of providentially-guided reform begun by Louis been permitted to proceed uninterruptedly, the transition to the new social order would have been accomplished without the death of the King. The Revolution was a contingent event. Once it had begun, however, and France had thereby rejected providence, its anti-providential nature had to be atoned for and Louis, the innocent victim, had to die in order to redeem France. Just as in orthodox christology the Fall, understood as arising from an abuse of human liberty, necessitated Christ’s death, so for Ballanche the Revolution, equally arising from an abuse of human liberty, necessitated Louis’ death.

The centrality of suffering to social progress shows that expiation remains a basic theme in Ballanche’s thought. Yet, it no longer means what it meant in the Lyon works. Expiation no longer signifies, as in the “Fragments”, merely the sufferings of terrestrial existence, for which one is compensated in the next life; nor does it merely foreshadow, as in *Antigone*, Christ’s efficacious expiation. In the 1818–1820 works, expiation, having been bonded to a theory of rehabilitation via social progress, is now part of the process by which humanity achieves its own rehabilitation. Similarly, the Revolution, formerly

divine punishment for an impious nation, has now been absorbed into the providentially-directed evolution of society. Even the once monstrous act of regicide has been constrained within the providential order of history. Nevertheless, expiation has been only imperfectly aligned with historically-mediated progress, as the confusion over the status of Louis XVI's death attests. Only in *Palingénésie sociale* will expiation and progress be fully identified in a unified philosophy of history.

Restoration

The revolutionaries' forced march of opinions shattered the harmony between French morality and opinion. Had France patiently awaited the revolution made by time (that is, providence), which would through its gradualness have kept morality and opinions in step, France would have eventually achieved the social emancipation sought by the revolutionaries, while avoiding the immense suffering inflicted by the Revolution. Instead, the Revolution has driven morality and opinions far apart, and French society now finds itself fundamentally divided. In fact, the schism between morality and opinions, whose political expression is the battle for control of society between Ultras and Liberals, threatens to destabilize the Restoration and once again pitch France into anarchy. In Ballanche's analysis, the task facing the Restoration is to heal the schism by re-establishing harmony between morality and opinions.

Whereas the early Ballanche resolutely opposed the Revolution and all its works, the Ballanche of *Institutions sociales* realizes that a return to the hierarchical order of things of the ancien régime is neither possible nor desirable: "on ne voudra pas souffrir que les opinions rétrogradent pour marcher d'un pas égal avec les mœurs. N'oublions pas que maintenant . . . le principe intellectuel a pris l'ascendant sur le principe moral, pour la direction de la société".²² Morality, then, must progress to match the conditions of the new age. Ballanche outlines his prescriptions for the harmonization of morality and opinion in terms of the proper relationship between their respective representatives, the Ultras and the Liberals. Ballanche notes that whereas the Ultra position, though not requiring a party to enunciate it, was

²² *OC*, 2:134.

long dominant and indeed unquestioned, the Liberal position has now achieved dominance. Ultras still defend the old order, of course, but Ballanche observes that their respect for tradition has frozen them into immobility, in the sense that their love of the old prevents them from recognizing the need for innovation. Hence, Ballanche re-baptizes the Ultras as *archéophiles*; correspondingly, the Liberals' readiness to embrace new ideas earns them the epithet of *néophiles*.²³

Ultras, believing that society is a primitive revelation that links humanity to God, insist that society has been imposed on humanity, that all liberties are concessions made by the King as God's vice-regent, and that society is superior to individuals. Liberals, arguing that society is a human creation, maintain that society is contractual, that individuals retain all rights they have not formally ceded in the social contract, and that individuals are superior to society. Ballanche's historicism enables him to absolve both sides of absolute error. The Ultras are correct as regards the past, when it was essential for the unbroken evolution of society that liberties be severely restricted in a hierarchical social order. Nevertheless, the errors of the Revolution made by humans must not be allowed to occlude the fact that the revolution made by time has continued to unfold and now demands the extension of liberties. Though Ultras such as Maistre and Bonald have played an important role in conserving the traditional view of society that must underlie the new social order, they have failed to recognize that it has fulfilled its mission and must yield to the new order. Ultras, Ballanche concludes, want society, and thus humanity, to remain a perpetual larva, never to transform into a butterfly.²⁴ Liberals, in turn, must realize that the new order of extended liberties will be not a repudiation of the old order but an evolution of it. They must not attack ideas they do not understand, thereby disparaging the contribution of the old order to social progress, nor forget that society is and will always remain a divine institution imposed on humanity for its rehabilitation.²⁵

Ballanche applies his distinction between *archéophiles* and *néophiles* to poetics as well as to politics. We recall that Bonald had linked language and society in such a way that any disturbance of the social order affected language. Conversely, Bonald regarded poetic innova-

²³ *OC*, 2:182–190.

²⁴ *OC*, 2:197, 348–350.

²⁵ *OC*, 2:198–200, 349–350.

tion as an attack on the social order. (Young Romantics like Victor Hugo agreed with Bonald that literary and socio-political change were linked, although they of course advocated what Bonald condemned.)²⁶ In poetics as in politics, *Institutions sociales* marks out a middle path. Beginning in agreement with Bonald that language and society are linked, Ballanche argues that because the transmission of language is ongoing new poetic forms are appropriate to the new social order that is dawning: "La langue et les institutions marchent en même temps: l'une est l'expression des autres".²⁷ Just as the new social order requires new institutions, so poets must cease sterile imitation of the classics so beloved by *archéophiles* and respond to the new order of things with a new poetry. In heeding the call to recreate poetry, however, literary *néophiles* must not reject the past wholesale. The new poetics must be grounded on the recognition that language is a divine institution, and on the understanding that the purpose of its innovations is to allow it to perform for the present age the providential mission that earlier poetics performed for their ages.²⁸

Ballanche reduces the conflict, whether between literary *archéophiles* and *néophiles* or between their socio-political analogues, the Ultras and Liberals, to a mutual failure to grasp the providential movement of history.²⁹ Once the historical process is grasped by both sides, Ballanche believes, factionalism will diminish as *néophiles* realize that *archéophiles* are guilty only of anachronism, not hatred of liberty, while *archéophiles* reconcile themselves to the new order and cease to blame *néophiles* for the work of time.³⁰ At the present moment, however, the political situation is worrying as Ultra and Liberal extremism runs rampant. Ballanche's 1818–1820 works represent an ongoing campaign to mitigate their respective excesses.

Ballanche particularly warns against the regressive beliefs of those who want to rush society back into an obsolete absolutism. He notes

²⁶ Frank Paul Bowman, "Occultism and the Language of Poetry" in *The Occult in Language and Literature*, ed. Hermione Riffaterre (New York: French Forum, 1980), 59.

²⁷ *OC*, 2:377.

²⁸ Ballanche devotes the second part of Chapter XI of *Institutions sociales* to the consequences for literature and the arts of the new order of things.

²⁹ Ballanche insists that neither side denies providence, rather each explains its operation in its own manner. *OC*, 2:187. Sainte-Beuve's observation that in a world in which everyone paid lip-service to the idea of providence, Joseph de Maistre was remarkable in *really* believing in the government of all things by providence (Sainte-Beuve, *Causeries de Lundi*, 14 vols. [Paris: Garnier, 3^e éd., 1850], 4:196) might with equal justice have been made of Ballanche.

³⁰ *OC*, 2:196–197.

that Christ's teaching of the solidarity of the human race brought religious, but not civil, equality into the world, hence slavery and medieval serfdom. It is precisely the task of the new social order to extend the principle of solidarity into the civil realm. Ultra hatred of all things deriving from the Revolution threatens to disrupt this process.³¹ Similarly, while acknowledging that the nobility has played an important role in French history, Ballanche insists that its mission is now finished. He admits that it is difficult to conceive of a social order without a nobility, but remarks that in past ages it must have been difficult to conceive of a society without slavery. Yet slavery, having become an anachronism, has been abolished, and so too must the nobility, which has similarly become anachronistic to the new age that is dawning. While this passage is remarkably similar to Henri de Saint-Simon's 1819 parable in *L'Organisateur* about a society in which the aristocracy has been eliminated, it should be recognized that whereas Saint-Simon's total reform of society is based on the new principle of productivity, Ballanche's position is rooted in his variation on the traditional assertion of royalist historiography that French kings have always been the true defenders of the people against the predations of the aristocracy.

Despite his conviction that the Liberal position coincides with the providential direction of history, Ballanche does not endorse their program in toto. Some of their desiderata, he is convinced, threaten to derail the process of harmonizing morality and opinions. In particular, Ballanche is deeply troubled by the Liberals' advocacy of religious tolerance and freedom of the press.³² Religious toleration, especially, is anathema to Ballanche. *Institutions sociales* argues that French thought, with its love of individualism and rejection of authority, tends intrinsically toward Protestantism, the principle of individualism and rejection of authority in religion. Since both society and religion are founded on hierarchy and solidarity, Protestantism is essentially anti-social, and thus anti-Christian. France's morality (that is, its Catholicism) protected it from Protestantism during the

³¹ Ultras extended the adjectival use of *regicide* to smear anything they considered reminiscent of the Revolution, however tenuous or fanciful the link. They spoke of the "regicide electoral law", "regicide constitutionalism", and even the "regicide Charter"; one feels that they only narrowly refrained from speaking of the "regicide Louis XVIII".

³² Both religious tolerance and freedom of the press are defended as essential liberties in Constant, *Principes de politique*, Chapters 17 and 16, respectively.

Reformation, but with the Enlightenment individualist ideas conquered the nation and the result was the Revolution that all but destroyed society. The Enlightenment and its daughter, the Revolution, are to the civil realm that which Protestantism is to the religious realm. While Catholicism has been reasserted in the Restoration, the movement for religious toleration threatens to weaken France's defences against Protestantism, thereby inviting a return to the anti-social conditions of the Revolution.³³ In place of religious toleration, Ballanche looks to a renewal of Catholic faith now that education is once again controlled by the Church. Further, since education will now undergird morality rather than opinions as under the Empire, it will assist the rapprochement of morality and opinions while at the same time mitigating the excesses of opinions.³⁴

The notion of the parallelism of the Revolution with the Reformation was a standard Ultra *topos*. While it received its classic formulation only in 1819 in Maistre's *Du Pape*, and is absent from both *Considérations sur la France* and *Principe générateur*, Maistre had firmly stated it as early as 1798 in his pamphlet *Réflexions sur le protestantisme dans ses rapports avec la souveraineté*. The identification of the Enlightenment and the Revolution, and by extension Liberalism, with Protestantism echoes through the works of other Traditionalists, thereby forming the context for Louis Girard's remark that Ultras considered the Charter a new Edict of Nantes guaranteeing the interests born of the Revolution.³⁵

Ballanche appears to mitigate his opposition to religious tolerance in *Le Vieillard et le jeune homme*, where he maintains that, regardless of sectarian disputes or even the official atheism and dechristianization campaign of the Revolution, there is a "*culte secret*" that regulates France. French society, he argues, is so firmly religious in its essence that it no longer requires guidance from official religion. Well-meaning zealots who want to treat France like an idolatrous nation by forcing religious truth on it are misguided. While it is true that individuals are often indifferent toward religion, this is no cause for worry because society as a whole is more religious than its members.³⁶ In

³³ OC, 2:135, 161–163.

³⁴ OC, 2:176.

³⁵ Louis Girard, *Les Libéraux français, 1814–1875* (Paris: Aubier, 1985), 59.

³⁶ Ballanche's de facto declaration of the separation of Church and State should be read, as Arlette Michel notes in her 1981 edition of *Le Vieillard et le jeune homme*, 36, 129 nn. 1–2, as a direct response to the first two volumes of Lamennais' theocratic *Essai sur l'indifférence en matière de la religion* (1817).

France, this ingrained Christianity has traditionally been bound to Catholicism, while in some other European countries one or other variety of Protestantism has been the bearer of the fundamental truths of Christianity. “En un mot, les cultes chrétiens sont l’expression du sentiment religieux de l’Europe, et le culte catholique est l’expression de ce même sentiment pour la France”.³⁷ Liberals, he continues, who insist that in order to protect all religions the State must not adopt any of them, miss the point. It is not a question of arbitrarily adopting this or that religion; the Charter, in recognizing Catholicism as the religion of France, simply confirms a historical reality. Catholicism is deeply embedded in French morality and the new social order is inseparable from France’s Catholic past: “La déclaration de la Charte ne constitue point un privilège en faveur du culte catholique; elle énonce seulement que l’expression du sentiment religieux du peuple français est la religion catholique, ce qui est de toute vérité”.³⁸ Ballanche’s opposition to religious tolerance remains fundamentally unchanged because he still sees France as indissolubly bound to its Catholic past. Indeed, it would be difficult to express more clearly the basic Ultra belief in the impossibility of separating a nation’s institutions from its history. It is important to recognize that in *Le Vieillard et le jeune homme* Ballanche does not actually advocate religious tolerance; rather, he maintains that each polity has its own historically legitimized faith, and in France this faith is Catholicism. Essentially, he has restated the position of *Institutions sociales*, though in language less offensive to Liberals and Protestants.³⁹

Ballanche similarly rejects freedom of the press on the grounds that it is harmful to morality. An unrestricted press, Ballanche claims, permits, even encourages, the circulation of all manner of scurrilous opinions. And while libel laws may ensure compensation for individuals libelled, the damage done to the morality of society as a whole is irreparable. Ballanche’s point is not that freedom of the press is an absolute evil, but that it must be introduced slowly and gradually so that it remains in tune with morality and is not used to shock it.⁴⁰

³⁷ OC, 3:94. Cf. Book Four of Rousseau’s *Emile*, where the Savoyard Vicar recommends that, even though the essential faith is that of the heart, one should comply with the religion of one’s country and one’s ancestors.

³⁸ OC, 2:94.

³⁹ Ballanche does not, therefore, as Arlette Michel states, *Le Vieillard et le jeune homme* (1981), 38, ally himself with Constant on the question of religious tolerance.

⁴⁰ OC, 2:138–141. Ballanche’s complicated attitude toward the publishing industry

The challenge facing the Restoration is to allow sufficient liberties in order to permit society to progress, yet not so many that it falls into anarchy. The Constitutional Charter is for Ballanche the regulator of this delicate balance. On 3 May 1814, the eve of his re-entry into Paris, Louis XVIII issued the Declaration of Saint-Ouen, in which he renounced a return to absolutism by promising to rule as a constitutional monarch. The promised constitution, hastily written in five days before the withdrawal of the Allied Powers from Paris, was promulgated on 4 June 1814 under the name of the *Charte constitutionnelle de la France*. The Charter's hybrid appearance reflects not only the rapidity with which it was composed, but also the difficulty of the challenge faced by its framers: to create a constitutional document that re-established Legitimism while maintaining certain Liberal institutions as the necessary price to be paid for essential support for the regime from Empire notables and those who had bought *biens nationaux*. The seventy-nine articles of the Charter's compromise between Legitimism and Liberalism promulgate a certain number of Liberal tenets, among them the recognition of principles of equality (Article I), individual liberty (IV), and property (IX), the accountability of ministers before an elected parliament (XIII), and the acceptance of trial by jury (LXV). The Charter protected the principle of Legitimism, however, by granting these tenets only by royal fiat. That is, they were established not as natural rights flowing from the sovereignty of the nation, but, in the words of its preamble, as privileges graciously bestowed by the King: "nous avons volontairement, et par le libre exercice de notre autorité, accordé et accordons, fait concession et octroi à nos sujets . . . de la charte constitutionnelle qui suit". Further, the King, though governing through his ministers, was considered sacred and unaccountable in his person (XIII), and held both executive authority and considerable legislative power since he both initiated and promulgated legislation (XVI, XVII).

The essential feature of the Charter for Ballanche, by which it is capable of harmonizing morality and opinions, is its subordination of new liberties to the principle of legitimacy. France's traditional morality is thereby linked to the new social order, providing continuity

and literary copyright is discussed in W. R. Paulson, "Propriété littéraire et parole traditionnelle: un inédit de Ballanche" in *Romantisme* 47 (1985): 3-16. There is also an older work by Mathieu Varille, *Les idées de Ballanche sur l'imprimerie et la librairie* (Lyon: Audin, 1938).

with the gradual evolution of liberties and at once restoring and extending the revolution made by time that was shattered by the Revolution. For this reason, Ballanche stresses the importance of Louis XVIII dating his reign from the death of the infant son of Louis XVI and his offering the Charter as a concession to his subjects, rather than receiving it from a sovereign nation.⁴¹ As we have seen, Ballanche, following Maistre, denies that constitutions can be constructed a priori. This principle does not disqualify the Charter, however, because Ballanche considers the Charter to be not an abstract delineation of a contractual society (as the Liberals understood it), but rather a transitional document whose function is to create the political conditions necessary for the gradual harmonization of morality and opinions.⁴² Even the Charter must respect the rhythm of the revolution made by time; that is, it must not be forced on the nation, but rather be assimilated over time into the French people by a slow and continuous intussusception.⁴³

Ballanche claims that Louis XVIII enshrined *le pardon et l'oubli* in the Charter.⁴⁴ The principles of pardon and forgetting are prominent in the Testament of Louis XVI, conveniently included as an appendix to Agnès Kettler's 1989 edition of *L'Homme sans nom*. Article XI of the Charter proclaims official amnesia toward the crimes of the Revolution ("Toutes recherches des opinions et votes émis jusqu'à la restauration sont interdites. Le même oubli est commandé aux tribunaux et aux citoyens"), but nowhere does it go so far as to pardon those who committed the crimes, although in the preamble to the Charter Louis XVIII does declare that he wishes to lead all France "à un oubli généreux du passé et à une réconciliation générale". Louis, again in the preamble, places the Charter under the inspiration of his martyred brother's Testament, so perhaps Ballanche has some justification in claiming that Louis XVIII endorses Louis XVI's forgiveness. Ballanche's filiation of the Charter to the Testament of Louis XVI links his historical and expiatory models of rehabilita-

⁴¹ OC, 2:30–31, 39.

⁴² OC, 2:74–75.

⁴³ OC, 2:133–134. The apt organic metaphor of intussusception (in biology, the taking in of foreign matter by a living organism and its conversion into organic tissue) is Ballanche's own. He may have found it in Charles Bonnet's *Palingénésie philosophique* (1769).

⁴⁴ OC, 3:257. For a discussion of Ballanche's ideas on forgiveness in the context of romanticism, see Arlette Michel, "La religion romantique et le pardon" in *Le Pardon* (*Le Point Théologique* 45), éd. Michel Perrin (Paris: Beauchesne, 1987), 205–217.

tion. The Charter, and the new social institutions it enshrines, embodies historically-mediated progress via social institutions, while the Testament bears witness to Louis XVI's free acceptance of suffering in expiation of the crimes of France. That Ballanche sees the Restoration as being founded on the Testament of Louis XVI as much as the Charter of Louis XVIII signifies that social progress is achieved only at the price of suffering. The endorsement of the Testament by the Charter indicates that the Restoration marks the end of the Revolution according to both the historical and the expiatory models. France has nothing more to expiate as the new social order has re-established the rehabilitatory mission of society. As Kettler observes: "La Révolution est définitivement entrée dans l'Histoire pour laisser place à la nouvelle alliance dont le Testament de Louis XVI constitue le fondement mystique et la Charte la promesse politique".⁴⁵

Ballanche considers the new alliance of the progressive and conservative principles established in the Restoration to be of momentous significance, for thereby France inaugurates a new stage in the rehabilitation of humanity:

Le peuple français est le premier des peuples de l'Europe qui ait admis le principe de l'indépendance mutuelle des institutions politiques et des institutions religieuses, tout en demeurant dans la même croyance religieuse, tout en restant fidèle au droit divin et à celui de la légitimité, qui en est la suite. Ainsi nous avons à-la-fois le principe du mouvement progressif, qui fait marcher la société dans des directions nouvelles, et le principe conservateur, qui modère et régularise le mouvement progressif (*OC*, 2:373).

The reconciliation of the principle of progressive movement and the principle of conservation in the Bourbon Restoration epitomizes the vision, to which all the 1818–1820 works are devoted, of the Restoration as a critical phase in the current era of the rehabilitation of the human race. William R. Paulson's choice of the metaphor of translation to explain Ballanche's purpose in the *Institutions sociales* misrepresents the active nature of Ballanche's instrumentalist conception of history.⁴⁶ History does not simply translate between the old order and the new, thereby "enabling the reader to understand a language

⁴⁵ Ballanche, *L'Homme sans nom*, éd. Agnès Kettler (Paris: France-Empire, 1989), 18.

⁴⁶ Paulson, "Ballanche ou le traducteur caché" in *Nineteenth-Century French Studies* 9 (1981): 159–170.

which is not his own"; it actively effects the transition. Similarly, *Institutions sociales*, like the Charter, offers not simply a "treaty of alliance between past and future",⁴⁷ but a means of effecting the transition from the former to the latter. *L'Homme sans nom* attempts to close the Revolution by integrating the guilt of the Revolutionaries into the collective expiatory process by which history unfolds.⁴⁸ *Le Vieillard et le jeune homme* expounds at length on certain political aspects of the Restoration—the nature and role of the two Chambers, and the relation of the King to both, the liberty of the press, juries, ownership of property and, above all, the electoral law⁴⁹—in an endeavour to show that the institutions established by the Charter are appropriate to the new social order. This encomium of the Charter is the heart of the work.

Throughout the 1818–1820 works, Ballanche argues that the providential duty of the Restored Bourbons is to direct the establishment of the new social order. He exhorts the Bourbons to turn a deaf ear to the regressive clamourings of the Ultras and embody the Fénelonian ideal of monarchy by embracing the needs of the age. *Élégie* in particular is devoted to recalling the Bourbons to their providential duty amid the reactionary hysteria following the duc de Berry's assassination in 1820.

In *Élégie*, Ballanche refers to the assassinated Berry as "*la victime auguste*". Since this is the phrase he uses to designate Louis XVI, we may infer that Ballanche thereby suggests a link between the two murdered Bourbons. In fact, Ballanche explicitly assimilates the murder of Berry to that of Louis XVI: "Tous les crimes, toutes les calamités de la révolution, se sont relevés de leur funeste tombeau. Le sang le plus précieux, ce sang si peu épargné, le sang des martyrs a coulé de nouveau parmi nous".⁵⁰ There is, however, a crucial difference between the two deaths: Berry's assassination, though it reproduces Louis XVI's martyrdom, is without effect providentially. That is, Louvel's act does not strike at the providential evolution of society in the manner of the execution of Louis XVI because it does not

⁴⁷ Ballanche's own description of the work in *Prolegomènes*. OC, 4:382.

⁴⁸ See Max Milner, "Ballanche et la culpabilité révolutionnaire" in *La Légende de la Révolution*, éd. Christian Croisille and Jean Ehrard (Clermont-Ferrand: Faculté des Lettres et Sciences humaines de l'Université Blaise Pascal, 1988), 353–362.

⁴⁹ All annotated in detail by Arlette Michel in her 1981 edition of *Le Vieillard et le jeune homme*.

⁵⁰ OC, 3:326.

overthrow the essential work of reconciliation outlined in the Testament of Louis XVI and put into operation by the Charter. The Revolution, Ballanche argues, is over; the crucial thing now is not to let passions aroused by the assassination sabotage the fragile process of reconciliation. The dying Berry knew this and, in a plea for harmony that parallels Louis XVI's Testament, pardoned Louvel. Unfortunately, Berry's plea has been ignored and everywhere voices of hatred clamour for vengeance. Ballanche insists that Ultra demands for revenge actually endanger the Bourbon dynasty because the only way to protect Berry's unborn child is through social harmony.⁵¹ Taking up his familiar argument that a dynasty possesses divine right only on condition of accurately representing the social conditions of its age, Ballanche warns of the dire consequences of ignoring Berry's plea:

Imprudents, apprenez donc une chose; apprenez qu'une dynastie est établie par Dieu pour diriger la société, mais la société telle que Dieu la lui a confiée, et non point la société telle que vous la faites dans vos rêves d'autrefois, telle que vous la concevez dans vos théories frappées de désuétude. Ecoutez cette vérité inexorable qui dit: Sitôt qu'une dynastie cesse de représenter la société, sitôt qu'elle cesse d'avoir le sentiment de ce qui est, alors elle ne peut subsister devant la toute-puissance des choses; alors le fait divin n'existe plus pour elle; alors sa mission est finie (*OC*, 3:348).

This passage constitutes both an attack, extraordinarily direct for Ballanche, on the Ultra dream of a return to absolutism and a stern warning to the Bourbons not to let the Ultras stampede them into reactionary policies that, by alienating them from the actual conditions of society, would be anachronistic and thus anti-providential and fatal to the dynasty. *Élégie* closes with an exhortation to the Bourbons to identify themselves with the divinely ordained march of progress: "Et vous, Dynastie glorieuse, illustre Maison de France, hâtez-vous de vous identifier avec nos destinées, qui vous réclament; hâtez-vous de vous identifier avec nos destinées, car il est de la nature de nos destinées d'être éternelles."⁵²

⁵¹ The duchesse de Berry was pregnant when Berry was murdered. As it was extremely unlikely that any other male Bourbon would be capable of producing a male heir, the hopes of dynastic succession rested on the unborn child. The child was safely delivered and the boy, known in royalist circles as *l'enfant du miracle*, received the title of duc de Bordeaux.

⁵² *OC*, 3:350.

CHAPTER SEVEN

BALLANCHE AND RESTORATION POLITICAL LIFE

Reception of 1818–1820 works

In *Institutions sociales* the Catholic Traditionalist doctrines of the divine origin and nature of society reflected faithfully in *Du Sentiment* and *Antigone* have been made subject to progress. Joseph de Maistre himself pounced on this distortion when he thanked Ballanche for sending him a copy of *Institutions sociales*.¹

Votre livre, monsieur, est excellent en détail: en gros, c'est autre chose. L'esprit révolutionnaire, en pénétrant un esprit très bien fait et un coeur excellent, a produit un ouvrage hybride, qui ne saurait contenter en général les hommes décidés d'un parti ou de l'autre. . . . Je ne crois pas, comme je vous l'ai dit franchement, que vous soyez tout à fait dans la bonne voie, mais vous y tenez un pied, et vous marcherez gauchement jusqu'à ce qu'ils y soient tous les deux. Avez-vous une feuille du *Courrier du Commerce* qui m'appelle "le vaporeux Piémontais", qui me compare à Zwingle, M. de Bonald à Luther, et vous, monsieur, au doux Mélanchthon? Si vous voulez examiner ce beau jugement et le confronter au mien, vous y verrez la preuve évidente de ce caractère hybride que je vous reprochais tout à l'heure. Le sans-culotte vous attend dans son camp; moi, je vous attends dans le mien.²

Maistre perceived that the introduction of a notion of progress in *Institutions sociales* had infected Ballanche's formerly pure Traditionalism with a "revolutionary spirit". His observation that the "hybrid work" would find favour with neither side proved prophetic, while

¹ According to Ballanche's friend Ferdinand Denis, Ballanche and Maistre never met in person, though they came close twice, once in 1807 in Chambéry, and again much later (sometime between 1817 and 1821) in Paris. Denis, *Journal (1829–1848)*, publié par Pierre Moreau (Paris: Plon, 1932), 47.

² Sainte-Beuve published Maistre's letter in *Portraits contemporains*, 5 vols. (Paris: Lévy, 1869–1870), 2:27–29. Jean Vaudon reproduced it in "Ballanche. A propos d'une oeuvre inédite" in *Le Correspondant* (25 October 1883), 258, 260, as did Charles Huit, omitting one line, in *La Vie et les oeuvres de Ballanche* (Lyon: Vitte, 1904), 50–51, while A. J. George's reprint omits the passage on the *Commerce* article, *Pierre-Simon Ballanche: Precursor of Romanticism* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1945), 69–70. In none of these works is the letter dated, nor does it appear in the five volumes of correspondence in Maistre's *Oeuvres complètes*.

his belief that the work represented a capitulation to the forces of irreligion and anarchy foreshadowed the reception Ultra critics accorded it. Eugène de Genoude, for example, in *Le Conservateur*, excoriated *Institutions sociales* for its fatal fascination with innovation.³

The article in the *Courrier du Commerce* referred to by Maistre was Pierre-Edouard Lemontey's (unsigned) 26 November 1818 review of *Institutions sociales* in the *Journal du Commerce* (as *Le Constitutionnel* was then called). Lemontey argued that though Ballanche had been deeply influenced by the "fanatical theocraticism" of Maistre, his receptivity to new ideas and his affirmation of the principle of progress separated him from his "confrères de l'école gothique". In the final analysis, Lemontey deemed *Institutions sociales* worthy of notice because it signalled the capitulation of the Ultra party: "Il a été écrit dans un camp ennemi des idées libérales; mais il peint avec tant de vérité la confusion qui y règne, et il fait à la raison humaine des concessions si décisives, qu'on peut le regarder comme un projet de capitulation". Most other Liberals, however, less discerning or simply less patient readers than Lemontey, followed the example of Jean-Denis Lanjuinais in the *Revue encyclopédique* (February 1819) and dismissed Ballanche as an outright reactionary. Ballanche had intended *Institutions sociales* to reconcile the Restoration factions by speaking to the Ultras of tradition and to the Liberals of liberty. Instead, the Ultras read "liberty" and bellowed, while the Liberals read "tradition" and sneered. Rejected by both sides, Ballanche saw his attempt at reconciliation swallowed up in the very factionalism it had been written to combat.

Ballanche himself acutely summed up his intellectual position at this time in the course of a note to Récamiér:

Vous aviez autre fois quelque dédain pour mes sentiments d'ultra; à present vous m'accusez d'être libéral; je n'ai cependant point changé. . . . Je suis resté, dans le monde littéraire et dans le monde politique, l'homme des sentiments anciens qui juge et apprécie les faits de la société nouvelle.⁴

In its reaction to *Institutions sociales*, Restoration society had been unsure as to how to receive a man of old sentiments coming to terms with the new social order. The reception of *Le Vieillard et le jeune homme*

³ Genoude, "Essai sur les *Institutions sociales* par M. Ballanche" in *Le Conservateur* 6 (1820): 606-610.

⁴ Ballanche to Récamiér, 25 February 1819, in Agnès Kettler, *Lettres de Ballanche à Madame Récamiér, 1812-1845* (Paris: Champion, 1996), 452-453.

similarly followed factional lines. Claude-Julien Bredin, Ballanche's old friend and confidant, had urged Ballanche to publish *Le Vieillard et le jeune homme*, praising it highly and assuring him that it was exactly what the public required.

Il faut absolument que vous [*Le Vieillard*] donniez aux peuples; les peuples ont besoin de cette doctrine, ils sont plongés dans un chaos d'opinions; ils sont dans des ténèbres obscures que des lueurs éblouissantes redoublent en quelque sorte. Donnez-leur votre lumière plus vraie: vous ne pouvez vous y refuser.⁵

Despite Bredin's enthusiasm, Ballanche had considered suppressing it altogether: "J'ai été sur le point de supprimer l'édition du *Vieillard et le jeune homme*, mais j'ai ensuite trouvé ce parti un peu sévère. Je me suis arrêté à celui de ne point l'envoyer aux journaux, et de le laisser circuler comme il pourrait dans le silence".⁶ While Ballanche claimed that it was concern lest the publication of the new work distract attention from the release of the second edition of *Antigone* (1819) that made him hesitate to publish it, his decision to let the work circulate quietly indicates that the true source of his anxiety was fear over its reception. His fears were well-founded. Though Ballanche had written *Le Vieillard et le jeune homme* to set out his ideas in comprehensible language, perhaps he regretted the effort when reaction to it began to crash about his head.

The sight of a supposed royalist seeking a *via media* or worse with the Liberals infuriated Ultra critics. Of course, the work simply reiterated the ideas of *Institutions sociales*, but whereas the political content of the 1818 work had been obscured beneath a mass of theorizing about the primitive origins of society and speech, the political content of *Le Vieillard et le jeune homme* was plain for all to see. Perhaps Ultras who had not read *Institutions sociales* carefully had believed that Ballanche's Bonaldesque language came from the pen of a dyed-in-the-wool Ultra. In any case, a sense of betrayal sharpened their outrage over the content of *Le Vieillard et le jeune homme*. Ultra reviewers no longer talked of a "hybrid work", or of Ballanche having one foot on the correct path; they condemned him absolutely. In January 1820 Chateaubriand, in *Le Conservateur*, coolly advised him to leave

⁵ Bredin to Ballanche, 24 September 1819, Claude-Julien Bredin, *Correspondance philosophique et littéraire avec Ballanche*. Publiée et commentée par Auguste Viatte (Paris: Boccard, 1928), 109–110.

⁶ Ballanche to Beuchot, 25 August 1819, in BN, n.a.f. MS 5197, feuillet 220.

political matters to those capable of discussing them competently.⁷ A few months later, Edouard de La Grange violently attacked Ballanche in *Le Défenseur*, accusing him of treason toward “la religion, la morale et la légitimité”.⁸ Ballanche observed sadly the scandal *Le Vieillard et le jeune homme* had aroused, yet critics’ attacks no longer paralysed him. For the most part he held himself above what he dismissed as factional disputes, serene in his devotion to what he believed to be the general interests of humanity.⁹

Despite its anonymity and limited press run, *L’Homme sans nom* was noticed. The faithful Bredin, of course, praised it to the skies and pleaded for a greater distribution.¹⁰ More significantly, both *Le Moniteur* (29 July 1820) and the *Journal de Paris* (26 August 1820) acknowledged it and added their voices to Bredin’s in urging the author not to deprive the general public of the work. Anonymity was soon broken by a friend of Juliette Récamier, André-Marie de Joguet, who named Ballanche as the author in a review in the *Journal des Débats* (18 September 1820). Joguet’s article emasculated the work by emphasizing its emotional solidarity with the Bourbon dynasty at the expense of its politico-historical content and cautionary tone. Ballanche remarked to Récamier that Joguet, though no doubt acting out of good intentions, had done him a disservice by recognizing only one aspect of the book and ignoring the other, more important, aspect: “J’ai un sentiment royaliste très énergique et très vrai; mais, en même temps, j’ai un sentiment très vif de ce qui est, de ce qui doit être. M. Joguet ne s’est, dans son article, associé qu’au sentiment royaliste”.¹¹ This remark captures both Ballanche’s reformist royalism and the popular conception of him as a traditional royalist. Indeed, popular expectations of Ballanche may be seen in the words of a Lyon ecclesiastic

⁷ Chateaubriand, “*Le Vieillard et le jeune homme*” in *Le Conservateur* 6 (January 1820): 28–29.

⁸ La Grange, “*Le Vieillard et le jeune homme*” in *Le Défenseur* (1820): 359–365. Bredin informed Ballanche that Guy-Marie Deplace, a Lyonnais friend and editor of Joseph de Maistre, had been scandalized by the claim in *Le Vieillard et le jeune homme* that religion would survive even the disappearance of the Catholic cultus and dogma. Bredin to Ballanche, 2 July 1821, in Bredin, *Correspondance philosophique et littéraire avec Ballanche*, 151.

⁹ Edouard Herriot, *Madame Récamier et ses amis*, 2 vols. (Paris: Plon-Nourrit, 1909), 2:98.

¹⁰ Bredin to Ballanche, 9 July 1829, in Bredin, *Correspondance philosophique et littéraire avec Ballanche*, 116–117.

¹¹ Ballanche to Récamier, 24 September 1820, in Kettler, *Lettres de Ballanche à Madame Récamier*, 499.

who informed one of Bredin's friends that Ballanche had just completed a new work entitled *Remords d'un Régicide*.¹² In October 1820, while visiting the maternal estate at Grigny, Ballanche noted that the locals had heard about *L'Homme sans nom* but that he did not dare give a reading of it for fear of offending their sensibilities.¹³

Most critics ignored the work. After all, it had not been widely released so there was little point to reviews in the major journals. Further, most of the reviews of *Le Vieillard et le Jeune homme* did not appear until after the publication of *L'Homme sans nom*. There is little likelihood that the Ultra critics who so savagely attacked the former work would have been any less infuriated by the new work that extended its political program, to the point even of suggesting that regicide was in some way providential. Liberal reviews of Ballanche's works appear to have dried up after *Institutions sociales*. Perhaps the Liberal press simply dismissed Ballanche as an Ultra who, after having shown some signs of reform, had relapsed into unrepentant reaction. This, at least, is the gist of the entry under Ballanche's name in the Liberal *Biographie nouvelle des contemporains* (1821), which begins, echoing Lemontey's evaluation of *Institutions sociales* as standing half way between old and new ideas: "Imprimeur-libraire, a récemment publié des ouvrages, où quelque esprit d'indépendance se trouve mêlé à la défense des vieux préjugés, et à une exaltation singulière d'idées religieuses". The entry closes, after having dismissively acknowledged *Du Sentiment* and *Antigone*, with a derisive reference to *Le Vieillard et le jeune homme* and *L'Homme sans nom*: "M. Ballanche a aussi publié quelques romans politiques, qui peuvent être fort poétiques car ils offrent peu de pages écrites pour les amis de la vérité".

The popular association of Ballanche with reactionaries never entirely vanished. In 1884, when place Henri IV in Lyon was re-named in honour of André-Marie Ampère, a municipal committee proposed to name a street leading to the square after Ballanche in honour of both the friendship between the two Lyonnais and Ballanche

¹² Bredin to Ballanche, 12 June [1820], in Bredin, *Correspondance philosophique et littéraire avec Ballanche*, 121.

¹³ Ballanche to Récamier, 23 October 1820, in Kettler, *Lettres de Ballanche à Madame Récamier*, 504. Three months earlier Ballanche had observed that in Lyon defenders of the old social order are numerous and those who perceive the dawn of a new social order are very few. Ballanche to Récamier, 22 July 1820, in Kettler, *Lettres de Ballanche à Madame Récamier*, 479; see also Ballanche to Amélie Récamier, 23 July 1820, in Kettler, *Lettres de Ballanche à Madame Récamier*, 747.

himself. The plan was opposed by those who insisted that Ballanche was not a philosopher, but a “philosophe chrétien, qualité qui diffère essentiellement de celle de ‘philosophe’ simplement dit”.¹⁴ The anti-clericals of the 1880s regarded Ballanche with the same suspicion as had the Liberals of the 1820s. The commission’s proposal was rejected and there is no municipal memorial of any kind to Ballanche in Lyon today. (There is a short, no more than twenty-five metres in length, dingy rue Ballanche just off place Gabriel Péri in the Guillotière district [3^{ème} arrondissement]. This street had received its name before 1884 under unknown circumstances. Ballanche himself had no connection with this district.)

Ballanche and Restoration historiography

Ballanche proposed his harmonization of the *principe du mouvement progressif* and the *principe conservateur* as a response to the polarized atmosphere of Restoration political life. Paul Bénichou links Ballanche’s 1818–1820 writings to the moderate constitutional monarchism of the Decazes Government that in these same years represented the short-lived triumph of moderation over Ultra extremism.¹⁵ There are also striking similarities between Ballanche’s thought and that of the Doctrinaires (led by Royard-Collard and François Guizot), with whom Camille Jordan was associated. The Doctrinaires, allies of Decazes who held posts in his government, emerged as an indentifiable group just as Ballanche was preparing *Institutions sociales* for publication. They similarly sought to reconcile the political extremes that had emerged from the Revolution by means of a theory of society based on the true sovereignty that comes from God and that in practice gives power to the bourgeoisie rather than to either the elites of the ancien régime or the masses.¹⁶ Michael Reardon has emphasized the correspondence between Ballanche’s theoretical mediation between Ultras and

¹⁴ A. Steyart, *Changements de Noms de Rues de la Ville de Lyon, proposés par la commission municipale* (Lyon: l’Auteur, 1884), 53.

¹⁵ Paul Bénichou, *Le Temps des prophètes* (Paris: Gallimard, 1977), 76. See also Roger Mauduit’s introduction to Ballanche, *Le Vieillard et le jeune homme*, nouvelle édition, avec des notes par Roger Mauduit (Paris: Alcan, 1929), 23.

¹⁶ Douglas Johnson, *Guizot: Aspects of French History, 1787–1874* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1963, 39–41. See also Pierre Rosanvallon, *Le Moment Guizot* (Paris: Gallimard, 1985), 26–31.

Liberals and his interests as a member of the commercial bourgeoisie, whose political and economic rights were threatened by both the Ultra defense of landed interests and the industrial critique of the Liberal Left.¹⁷

Yet, Ballanche never formally aligned himself with either Decazes or the Doctrinaires, nor indeed with any political party. Ballanche considered political solutions to be merely stop-gap measures. While this view in part reflects the general suspicion, shared by Chateaubriand and Constant, of political parties as disruptive expressions of factional passions,¹⁸ more fundamentally Ballanche believed that true reconciliation could be built only on a firm philosophical foundation constructed independently of the factional chatter of politics. Ballanche therefore scorned what he considered petty party politics in favour of fundamental intellectual work:

L'aride politique elle-même, vous savez, a pour moi des profondeurs inconnues à beaucoup d'autres. Je ne rêve que traditions, puissance de la pensée, ères anciennes ou ères nouvelles, religion sociale, solidarité de l'espèce humaine.¹⁹

Ballanche here embodies one aspect of what Jerome McGann has called the Romantic ideology: Romantic poetry (McGann is speaking of Shelley, Wordsworth, and Coleridge) develops an argument that the complex divisions and conflicts of the age "can only be resolved beyond the realm of immediate experience, at the level of the mind's idea or the heart's desire. The Romantic position . . . is that the poet operates at such levels of reality, and hence that poetry by its nature can transcend the conflicts and transciences of this time and that place."²⁰ Like the poetry of the English Romantics, Ballanche's works attempt to resolve socio-political conflicts by subordinating them to a transcendent law. While, then, there are genuine affinities between Ballanche and Decazes and the Doctrinaires, they are the result of a convergence of independent programs. Moreover, some aspects of Ballanche's thought approximate the Ultra position. Ballanche's true

¹⁷ Michael F. Reardon, "Pierre Ballanche As a French Traditionalist" in *Catholic Historical Review* 53 (1968): 573.

¹⁸ Guizot was one of the first French political thinkers to argue the importance of organized political parties to constitutional government. Johnson, *Guizot*, 69.

¹⁹ Ballanche to Récamier, 5 March 1819, in Kettler, *Lettres de Ballanche à Madame Récamier*, 462.

²⁰ Jerome J. McGann, *The Romantic Ideology: A Critical Investigation* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983), 69.

independence and originality as a thinker lies less in the doctrines he defended than in the manner in which he arrived at them in the context of the historiographical battles of the early Restoration.

Both Liberals and Ultras used historical arguments as political capital. The most powerful reading of French history, one that was appropriated by Liberals and Ultras alike, was the "Two Frances" theory pioneered by Henri de Boulainvilliers in the third volume of *Etat de la France* (1728) and revived by François de Montlosier in his defence of the aristocracy, *De la Monarchie française* (1814). Montlosier interpreted the history of France as a perpetual struggle between two distinct races. The distinction was originally literal, deriving from the invasion of the Franks into the territory of the Gauls. Over the centuries the struggle had been transformed into one between the second estate, preserving the aristocratic values of the Franks, and the third estate, descended from the conquered and enslaved Gauls though now following an urban, commercial way of life. Ever since the emancipation of the Communes in the twelfth century, Montlosier argued, the third estate has gradually encroached on the privileges of the second estate, and in the French Revolution attempted to usurp its position outright. At present, the two Frances are locked in a life and death struggle for control of post-Revolutionary society.²¹

Liberals quickly and correctly perceived in Montlosier's historiography a sophisticated threat to their interpretation of French history as the progressive and irreversible extension of social and political liberties. However, rather than refute him by disproving his two race theory, they adapted it to their own purposes. Thus Charles Comte and Charles Dunoyer, in *Le Censeur européen*, depict the Franks/second estate as a violent and lazy parasitic remnant of feudalism living off the labour of the Gauls/third estate, whose pacific, industrious practices constitute true civilization. The third estate has made steady gains since the emancipation of the Communes, and now, aided by Liberal (specifically *industriel*) economic and political theory, its progressive emancipation is about to culminate in the overthrow of the centuries-old oppression by the second estate. Most other Liberals, Saint-Simon obviously but Constant too in somewhat different language, accepted both the conception of French history as a life and death struggle between two principles, one parasitic and regressive,

²¹ Shirley M. Gruner, "Political Historiography in Restoration France" in *History and Theory* 8 (1969): 347-349.

the other productive and progressive, and the conviction that the direction of history itself assures the eventual triumph of the latter.²² The Liberal version of the Two Frances theory was most forcefully expressed in the works of François Guizot, where it was used to domesticate the Revolution itself. Rather than a monstrous anomaly, the Revolution was simply the most recent stage in an ancient and on-going process of emancipation:

For more than thirteen centuries France has contained two peoples, conquerors and conquered. For more than thirteen centuries the conquered people battle to throw off the yoke of the conquerors. Our history is the history of this struggle. In our time, a decisive battle has been waged. It is called the Revolution.²³

This theme formed the basis of Guizot's lectures at the Collège de France until they were suspended by order of the Government in 1822.

Liberals at first denounced the Charter on the grounds that its investiture of sovereignty in the person of the King betrayed the fundamental Revolutionary principle of the sovereignty of the nation. Further, they feared that the Charter's ambiguous wording on such crucial matters as the relations between Church and State, censorship, and the voting rights of the Chambers disguised an attempt to reintroduce absolutism. Very soon, however, while still suspicious of the intentions of its framers, Liberals began to assimilate the Charter into their version of the Two Frances theory. Guizot, in *Du Gouvernement représentatif et de l'état actuel de la France* (1816), interpreted the Charter as a mediator between the Two Frances, a truce between the Revolution and the counterrevolution. The next year he argued, more boldly, that the Charter accepts and preserves the best part of the Revolution: "It is neither to the crimes nor to the misfortunes of the Revolution that we owe the Charter; it is solely to those legitimate and healthy principles of the Revolution, to whatever was noble and generous in it".²⁴ Guizot effectively commandeered the Charter; refusing to recognize it as an act of gracious condescension by Louis XVIII toward a defeated Revolution, he proclaimed it an official act of acceptance and institutionalization by the King of the goals of the Revolutionaries.

²² Gruner, "Political Historiography", 349–359.

²³ Guizot, *Du Gouvernement de la France depuis la Restauration et du ministère actuel* (1820), 1–2. Quoted in Stanley Mellon, *The Political Uses of History* (Stanford: Stanford UP, 1958), 12–13. See also Gruner, "Political Historiography", 360.

²⁴ Guizot, "Politique Spéciale" in *Archives* 1 (1817): 138. Quoted in Mellon, *Political Uses of History*, 48.

Other Liberals followed Guizot's lead. In early 1818 Ballanche's old friend, Camille Jordan, published, under the title *Session de 1817*, a manifesto demanding a Liberal application of the Charter. Arguing that the progress of human reason, the development of commerce, and the new social conditions of post-Revolutionary society necessitate a reform of social and political institutions, Jordan demanded the definitive abolition of privileges, real political power for the productive middle classes, public administration of the clergy, liberty of the press, and a fair distribution of taxes.²⁵ Interpreted in this manner, the Charter allowed Liberals to defend the gains of the Revolution without appearing disloyal to the Restoration. The gains of the Revolution having been institutionalized in the Charter, the Restoration becomes the extension of the Revolution rather than its repudiation. By means of the reading of history pioneered by Guizot Liberals could defend themselves from Ultra charges of sedition, and even turn the tables by exposing the Ultras, because of their rejection of the Charter, as the enemies of the King and as such the true revolutionaries.²⁶

In contrast to their boldness regarding the Charter, Liberals displayed a marked reluctance to discuss the execution of Louis XVI and the status of regicides. By 1818, however, encouraged by the general Liberal resurgence under the Decazes regime, the *Bibliothèque historique* hazarded a plea for clemency for regicides. The journal was fined and censured, but the issue had been breached. A few months later it was brought into the open when the voters of the Isère elected the regicide Abbé Grégoire to the Chamber of Deputies. When, on 2 December 1819, Grégoire attempted to take his seat, cries of "point de régicide" interrupted the reading. In the short, violent debate that followed Ultras denounced the seating of a regicide as a fundamental attack on the very nature of the Restoration, while Liberals insisted that article XI of the Charter specifically bars any penalties for past votes and opinions. In the end, the Ultras won; Grégoire was rejected.

Meanwhile, the Ultras had not abandoned Montlosier's Two Frances theory to the Liberals. Denying the Liberal argument of historical inevitability, Ultras concluded that the Restoration represents a crucial moment in the still undecided combat between the two Frances: either the usurper will triumph and institutionalize the Revolution, or "old

²⁵ Louis Trénard, "Constant et les libéraux lyonnais" in *Annales Benjamin Constant* 2 (1986): 66.

²⁶ Mellon, *Political Uses of History*, 47–50.

France” will repulse the usurper and restore society to its legitimate order. Their advice to the King was unequivocal: Louis must recognize that the interests of the monarchy are identical with those of the second estate, which he must support in every instance against the encroachments of the third estate or risk the fate of his brother. (Montlosier himself, though an active proponent of a revived aristocracy, championed a moderate royalism that distanced him from the Ultras. Later in the Restoration he attacked the Ultras directly in his campaign to purge clerics from the political life of France.)

Ultras condemned the Charter as a Trojan horse calamitously admitted into the royalist camp. Bonald early caught the feeling of his party when, lamenting the Charter to Maistre soon after its promulgation, he remarked on “la folie des constitutions écrites”, adding that “jamais la philosophie irréligieuse et impolitique n’avait remporté un triomphe aussi complète”.²⁷ The 1815 reprinting of Maistre’s *Considérations sur la France* was widely interpreted as a calculated attack on the Charter. And Lamennais, in the first volume of *Essai sur l’indifférence en matière de religion*, cited the Charter one more instance of the disdain in which contemporary France holds the faith of its fathers.²⁸ Aghast at the concessions granted by the Charter, Ultras scorned Louis XVIII as a Liberal dupe. Rallying around the comte d’Artois, the King’s brother, they denounced the Charter as a betrayal of royal sovereignty and condemned Decazes’ moderate constitutionalism as a shameful and unnecessary compromise with the Revolution. Barthélemy de Castelbajac, writing in 1818 against Guizot in *Le Conservateur*, anathematized the very notion of an alliance between a Bourbon King and the Revolution as blasphemous. The Charter is not a truce between two parties, but “freely and entirely the work of the royal will; Louis XVIII does not owe his throne to a compromise with the Revolution”.²⁹ Bonald similarly grumbled to Maistre early the next year: “nous périssons aux cries de ‘Vive le roi et

²⁷ Bonald to Maistre, 7 October 1814, in Maistre, *Oeuvres complètes*, 14 vols. (Lyon: Vitte, 1884–1886), 14:300. Cf. Bonald to Chateaubriand: “Si mes oeuvres doivent passer à postérité, je ne veux pas qu’on ait à me reprocher d’y trouver un mot en faveur de la Charte”. Quoted in Dominique Bagge, *Les Idées politiques en France sous la Restauration* (Paris: PUF, 1952), 188.

²⁸ Jean-René Derré, “La Théorie du pouvoir dans l’ultramontanisme Mennaisien” in *Littérature et Politique dans l’Europe du XIX^e siècle* (Lyon: Presses Universitaires de Lyon, 1986), 52.

²⁹ Barthélemy de Castelbajac, “Réflexion sur un article du *Moniteur*, du 21 août [1818]” in *Le Conservateur* 1 (1818): 67. Quoted in Mellon, *Political Uses of History*, 97.

la Charte'".³⁰ Ultras, in short, refused to accept the Liberal equation of constitutionalism and royalism; for them, constitutionalism could only equal revolution. In 1822 Jean-Claude Clausel de Coussergues flatly labelled the Liberal conception of the Charter a threat to the existence of the monarchy.³¹ In 1825, in an extreme case but one noteworthy for its explicit association of constitutionalism with blasphemy, a curé in Orléans told his parishioners: "my dear brothers, Charles X is not a Christian, since he upholds the Charter, which is an act against religion; we must not pray for him any more than for Louis XVIII, who was the originator of this Charter. Both of them are damned."³²

Barely two months after the Chamber's rejection of Grégoire, the political influence that the Liberals had painstakingly built up since 1814 was swept away in the wave of reaction that followed the assassination of the duc de Berry. Not only did the assassination mark the end of Liberal attempts to claim the Restoration as the triumph of the Revolution, it also terminated Decazes' moderate constitutionalism. Ultras were able to convince Louis XVIII that Louvel's act was part of a general European conspiracy against legitimate dynasties and that repression alone could safeguard his throne. The duc de Richelieu, who replaced Decazes as Government leader, quickly passed, in the face of intense Liberal opposition, legislation suspending personal liberties, restricting the freedom of the press, and promulgating an electoral law that reduced the franchise and increased the power of the richest section of the electorate. Though Richelieu's ministry included Ultras, Richelieu himself was not an Ultra and, while far from adverse to repressive measures, he did try to walk a middle path between Liberal and Ultra extremes. He was able to tread this precarious line for almost two years, but in December 1821, having lost the support of the King, Richelieu was forced to resign and the Ultras were called to power. The ensuing Villèle Government, openly renouncing the conciliative program of the Charter, enacted the Ultra reading of the Two Frances Theory. And when in 1824 the openly Ultra comte d'Artois succeeded his brother as Charles X, royal policy was seemingly designed to demonstrate that the Bourbon dynasty had lost all contact with the conditions of the century.

³⁰ Bonald to Maistre, 3 January 1819, in Maistre, *Oeuvres complètes*, 14:339.

³¹ Clausel de Coussergues, *Quelques Considérations sur la marche du parti libérale dans les premiers mois de 1822* (Paris: 1822), 27. Quoted in Mellon, *Political Uses of History*, 99.

³² Quoted in Mellon, *Political Uses of History*, 188.

On several counts, the Ballanche of the 1818–1820 works approximates the Liberal historiography worked out in the early Restoration. He shares the fundamental Liberal conviction that history is moving irreversibly in the direction of greater liberty; he believes that it is time to rehabilitate the regicides; and he venerates the Charter as an instrument of reconciliation between old and new France. Ballanche's attribution in *L'Homme sans nom* of responsibility for the Revolution to the aristocracy and his insistence in *Élégie* that Ultra extremism endangers the Restored Bourbons mirrors the views of Guizot. Further, the program of Louis XVI's reforms hailed by Ballanche in *L'Homme sans nom* corresponds to the policies of Turgot and particularly Necker during their tenures as Louis XVI's Ministers of Finance. Of the three acts Ballanche identified as being particularly significant for the evolution of French society, the first was proposed by Necker (although carried out by Loménie de Brienne), and the third is Necker's famous *Compte rendu au roi*. Noting these concordances with Liberal thought, many commentators have decided that, though problematic, Ballanche ought best be described as a Liberal. Arlette Michel speaks of a “*libéralisme ballanchien*”, while Roger Mauduit concludes that despite his affinity to some theocratic conceptions Ballanche remained and would always remain a liberal.³³ Without seeking to deny the Liberal aspect to his thought, the fact remains that Ballanche refused to identify himself as a Liberal, and indeed nursed a visceral hate for Guizot and Adolphe Thiers. Further, there is much in Ballanche's thought that can hardly be described as Liberal. Consider, for example, Ballanche's appropriation of the Turgot-Necker reform tradition. Not only does Ballanche make it the unswerving policy of Louis XVI's entire reign, he gives the credit for it to Louis himself, dismissing the ministers as mere agents of the royal will. The changes wrought in Ballanche's appropriation may be seen by comparing Ballanche's account of Louis XVI's reign to Necker's own account in *De la Révolution française* (1797) and Germaine de Staël's defence of her father in *Considérations sur les principaux événements de la Révolution française* (1816, published by her heirs in 1818). Father and daughter stress the difficulty and limited success Turgot and Necker had in convincing a reluctant Louis XVI to adopt their policies, and the long periods during which their enemies were in the ascendant at Court. Further, the King adopted the reforms as means of preventing revolution, not

³³ Ballanche, *Le Vieillard et le jeune homme*, éd. Michel, 19; Ballanche, *Le Vieillard et le jeune homme*, éd. Mauduit, 37–38.

out of a progressive spirit. Guizot similarly celebrated the Charter as a victory torn from a reluctant Louis XVIII. For Ballanche, on the contrary, the policies of both Louis XVI and Louis XVIII sprang from their Fénelonian love of the people; each King, fulfilling the ideal of divine right, embodied the providential direction of social progress for his era.

It is here, in his version of the divine right of kings and the duties of ruling dynasties, that Ballanche most clearly distinguishes himself from the Liberals. Ballanche's doctrines of divine right and popular consent remain, despite an element of progressivism, deeply conservative because they affirm that rulers know better than peoples what is in the peoples' best interests. These doctrines, moreover, are grounded in Ballanche's fundamental conviction, outlined in *Institutions sociales*, that society is a divine institution founded for the rehabilitation of the human race. Progress and liberty, in short, do not mean for Ballanche exactly what they mean to Liberals. Similarly, there is no place in Liberal historiography for Ballanche's fundamental concept of expiation. If Liberals talk about suffering at all, it is only to contrast the misery of oppressed masses with the well-being that will be the fruit of a society governed according to Liberal principles. For Ballanche, on the contrary, suffering is the inevitable concomitant of the social progress by which humanity overcomes the Fall. It is in his affirmation that social institutions must be firmly grounded on religion that Ballanche's affinities with Ultra thought are most apparent. In his final analysis, the Liberals, for all their progressivism and respect for the Charter, err critically in denying the religious nature of society. Ballanche is neither a Liberal nor an Ultra; he is a conservative who believes that social change must occur because it has been so decreed by providence, but that it must occur slowly, respecting extant institutions and customs. He believes that the new social order will be better than the old if and because it preserves what was best in the old order.

Ballanche regarded the ongoing dual between Ultras and Liberals with dismay: "Des nuages s'amoncellent sur l'horizon. Le grand problème de la société actuelle est de nouveau mis en question. . . . La charte elle-même va disparaître dans le creuset des interprétations et des commentaires".³⁴ Aside from endangering the Restoration settlement with the factionalism, Ultras and Liberals, in Ballanche's view,

³⁴ Ballanche to Récamier, 23 February 1819, in Kettler, *Lettres de Ballanche à Madame Récamier*, 449-450.

operate on false historiographical principles. Ballanche's historiography may be distinguished from the dominant Liberal and Ultra versions not only by its content, but also by its rejection of the basic historiographical assumption, derived from Montlosier and accepted by both Ultras and Liberals, of French history as a Manichaean combat between two opposing principles.³⁵ Ballanche, while recognizing the existence of two opposing principles, regards history as an epic of evolution rather than combat. History, moreover, is not a passive record, nor is evolution mere compromise; rather, history, guided by providence, actively effects the transition from the old order to the new order. Ballanche's conception of the instrumentality of the Charter illustrates the transformative operation of history. Since Ballanche conciliates by means of historical filiation, rather than doctrinal compromise,³⁶ his new order retains elements of the old order. Ballanche transforms Montlosier's two races from competing species into two phases of the evolution of a single species:

il y a en Europe deux parties bien distinctes, c'est-à-dire l'Europe civilisée et l'Europe non civilisée. En parlant de civilisation, il faut bien comprendre que j'entends la civilisation actuelle, sans prétendre la juger. Ainsi, pour parler plus exactement, je dirai qu'il y a deux âges de civilisation en Europe. . . .

Mlle. Amélie me parlait, dans une de ses dernières lettres, de l'ouvrage de M. Guizot [*Du gouvernement de la France depuis la Restauration et du ministère actuelle*]. Je ne l'ai point lu. Mais j'ai vu, d'après les journaux, que ce qui a le plus effarouché, c'est le partage de la nation française en deux peuples, les Francs et les Gaulois. Mme. de Staël a, je crois, le première, manifesté cette opinion. Vous savez que ce n'est pas mienne. Je crois que le régime féodal avait une autre origine que la conquête. Dans mes *Institutions sociales*, j'avais bien aussi établi l'hypothèse de deux peuples. Mais, sans m'expliquer sur le fond de la question, j'avais appelé l'un le peuple des souvenirs, et l'autre le peuple des destinées nouvelles. Le fait est que la révolution française a trouvé la nation composée de deux peuples, l'un trop civilisé, et l'autre demi-barbare, ou même entièrement barbare. Mais le fait est aussi que le peuple barbare a fait de grands progrès dans la civilisation, et qu'il en fait tous les jours. Le

³⁵ Ballanche does not discuss Montlosier in *Institutions sociales*. He mentions Montlosier once in *Prolegomènes*, appropriately distancing himself from his aristocratic program: "M. de Montlosier a donc raison de blâmer l'établissement monarchique de Louis XIV, quoique ce soit dans d'autres intérêts et d'autres vues". *OC*, 4:292. Montlosier is cited, in a twist on the Two Frances theory, in *Ville des Expiations* (*VE*, 49).

³⁶ Bénichou, *Temps des prophètes*, 78.

fait est encore que le sentiment moral et j'oserai dire le sentiment religieux abandonne tous les jours, de plus en plus, le peuple des anciens souvenirs pour se réfugier dans le peuple des destinées nouvelles, quelle que soit, au reste, l'origine de ces deux peuples. Il faut bien que ce soit ainsi puisque le peuple des destinées nouvelles est devenu la société actuelle. Il faut bien que le sentiment moral et le sentiment religieux entrent dans ce qui est inévitablement la société actuelle, ou, si vous voulez, l'avenir de la société. Cela me paraît le jugement de Dieu.³⁷

Turning from the relation of Ballanche's 1818–1820 works to the political alignments of Restoration to the internal development of Ballanche's thought itself, it is impossible not to be struck by the central position the hitherto absent theme of progress now holds. Basic Traditionalist assumptions such as the divine right of kings and dynastic legitimacy have been made subject to progress. And though Ballanche remains adamant that Christianity is the final revelation, and so anticipates no new revelation,³⁸ he now accepts that the eternal truths of Christianity unfold over time as the principle of religious equality is gradually extended into the civil realm. The 1818–1820 works, in sum, present social progress as the unfolding in history of the divine plan for the rehabilitation of the human race. Ballanche has similarly attached additional senses to expiation. In *Antigone*, expiation acquired a social dimension through the role of suffering in Antigone's reconciliation of Thebes. Yet, in that work the social dimension of expiation was extremely circumscribed as Antigone merely foreshadowed Christ. *Institutions sociales* now links suffering and progress in the traumatic ages of crisis necessary to the rehabilitatory function of society. The 1818–1820 works represent a transformation in Ballanche's thought from the intensely personal preoccupations of the Lyon works. The years immediately following 1814 were critical years for Ballanche, years in which he modified the Traditionalist assumptions of his earlier works by the adoption of ideas derived from Liberal thought, above all the idea of progress. As Sainte-Beuve said, Ballanche here "embraced the sphere of human development".³⁹

Ballanche's old friends from Lyon took credit for the transformation they observed in his thought: "c'est vous surtout, [Bredin], qui

³⁷ Ballanche to Récamier, 29 November 1820, in Kettler, *Lettres de Ballanche à Madame Récamier*, 510, 512.

³⁸ OC, 2:363. Ballanche criticizes Maistre's expectation of third revelation. See the "Onzième Entretien" of *Soirées de Saint-Petersbourg* (1821).

³⁹ Sainte-Beuve, *Portraits contemporains*, 2:2.

l'avez transformé, et du légitimiste absolu avez fait le philosophe chrétien et libéral".⁴⁰ Bredin, in fact, abhorred politics and was saddened to see Ballanche so caught up in public affairs.⁴¹ His indisputably immense influence on Ballanche weighed much more heavily on purely religious and intellectual matters than on political concerns. It is more likely that the Liberal ideas Ballanche encountered in Récamier's circle were the most important factor in his transformation from an absolute Legitimist into a liberal and Christian philosopher. Just as Récamier had been responsible for the transformation of Ballanche's emotional life, so she was responsible for the transformation of his intellectual life. To read *Institutions sociales* is to pass an evening at the Récamier salon. At the centre of the room in front of the fire an ancien régime *seigneur*, Montmorency perhaps, struggles to defend the Ultra position against the brilliant attacks of Constant, while snippets of conversation drift by from intense supplementary discussions devoted now to theories of language, now to the esoteric teachings of pagan antiquity, and now to the significance of newly translated Hindu texts. And everywhere the voice of Juliette Récamier urges goodwill and moderation, assuring everyone that harmony is attainable among persons of good faith.

In his 1818–1820 works Ballanche has become genuinely progressive while remaining genuinely religious. Moreover, he has begun to define progress and religion in relation to each other: against the Liberals, he argues that progress must arise out of religion; against the Ultras, he insists that true religion must be progressive. In this sense, despite his engagement with the historiographical battles of the early Restoration, Ballanche has developed, as the reception of his 1818–1820 works demonstrates, what amounts to a private political vocabulary. Though the works of these years have unequivocally extended the notion of suffering from the personal to the social realm, Ballanche has not yet fully integrated his transformed notion of expiation with his newly acquired sense of progress. Similarly, though these works wrestle with historical questions, they do not constitute a full-fledged philosophy of history because they leave implicit many of Ballanche's underlying historiographical principles. Ballanche will make

⁴⁰ Jacques Roux to Bredin, undated (1820), in Bredin, *Correspondance philosophique et littéraire avec Ballanche*, 115.

⁴¹ See Bredin to Auguste Touchon, 18 January 1821, in *Lettres inédites de Claude-Julien Bredin*, éd. Louis de Launay (Lyon: Rey, 1936), 229.

good this omission in the works that comprise *Palingénésie sociale*, while integrating contemporary France into the history of the entire human race. The distinction between the two sets of works is not so much a question of chronology, because Ballanche had at least sketched out most of the works that were to comprise *Palingénésie sociale* by 1820, as of a division of labour. Between 1818 and 1820 Ballanche felt compelled to make known his social and political views; after 1820 he set to work elaborating the theoretical framework on which his social and political views rested.

PART THREE

SOCIAL PALINGENESIS

Je veux exprimer la grande pensée de mon siècle.

“Dédicace”, *Essais de Palingénésie sociale*

CHAPTER EIGHT

ESSAIS DE PALINGENESIE SOCIALE

In Part Three, after introducing the works that comprise the *Essais de Palingénésie sociale*, I show how in these texts the complexes of ideas symbolized by expiation and progress merge, and become fully explicable only in terms of the other, in a variety of concepts that together form a full-fledged philosophy of history.

The accession to power of the Ultras following the assassination of Berry in 1820 directly affected the Abbaye-aux-Bois circle, and with it Ballanche. Villèle awarded Mathieu de Montmorency the portfolio of Foreign Affairs, and appointed his brother Adrien, the duc de Laval, Ambassador to Rome, and Chateaubriand Ambassador to London. Chateaubriand, who had been miffed at receiving what he deemed a token post, quickly moved into the inner circle of power as Mathieu de Montmorency's replacement at Foreign Affairs in December 1822 after Mathieu was forced to resign as the result of a disagreement with Villèle over French intervention in Spain. In general, the older members of the Récamier salon supported the Ultra Government, while the younger generation, plus Ballanche and Camille Jordan (until his death in May 1821), opposed the swing to the right. Juliette herself maintained her accustomed neutrality and was able to prevent a complete rupture between her divided friends.¹

A severe turn for the worse in his sister's health forced Ballanche to spend the last six months of 1820 in Lyon looking after her. This was an unhappy time for him. Aside from missing Juliette and anxiety over Aimée, the political situation was deeply troubling. In his letters to Juliette and Amélie Récamier Ballanche pours out his fears that the turn to the right represents a betrayal of the fundamental work of reconciliation of the Charter and the abdication of France's progressive ministry over Europe in favour of the repression imposed at the Congress of Troppau and Leybach under the leadership of Metternich.²

¹ Edouard Herriot, *Madame Récamier et ses amis*, 2 vols. (Paris: Plon-Nourrit, 1909), 2:106; Albert Joseph George, *Pierre-Simon Ballanche: Precursor of Romanticism* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1945), 86.

² Ballanche to Amélie Récamier, 6 September 1820, and Ballanche to Récamier,

On Adrien de Montmorency's appointment as Ambassador, Récamier had promised to visit him in Rome. Adrien, knowing that she would not leave Paris as long as Chateaubriand was there, had not taken her promise seriously. By 1823, however, Chateaubriand, now glorying in his Ministerial power, had tired of the unaccustomed fidelity demanded of him by Récamier and reverted to his old habits, most publically with Cordélia de Castellane. Juliette, infuriated by his moral recidivism and appalled to find herself the object of salon gossip, fled Paris, on the pretext of her niece's health, for a lengthy sojourn in Italy. Juliette and Amélie, accompanied by Ballanche and Jean-Jacques Ampère (the twenty-three year old son of André-Marie who had been presented to Récamier in 1820 and had since, to his father's dismay, been unable to tear himself away) set out for Rome on 2 November 1823. Upon their arrival in mid-December, the travellers established themselves in the Via Balbuino near the Spanish Steps, the Récamiers at number 65 and Ballanche at number 148. Between her travelling companions, the French community in Rome, and visitors from France, Juliette largely reconstituted her salon in Italy.³ Ballanche was happy in Rome; he saw his idol everyday, Chateaubriand was far away and in disgrace, and he was immensely productive intellectually. His researches into Roman antiquity fascinated him as he worked out the ideas that would form his *Formule générale de l'histoire de tous les peuples appliquée à l'histoire du peuple romaine*, and, as he told Beuchot, amassed the hoard of notes that would keep him occupied for the rest of his life.⁴

Jean-Baptist Dugas-Montbel, Ballanche's old friend from *Amicitiae et litteris* days in Lyon and now famous as the translator of Homer, came to visit the little circle shortly after New Year's 1824. In late January Dugas-Montbel and Ballanche left Rome to visit Naples and perhaps Sicily, which Ballanche always called la Grande Grèce in honour of the Magna Graeca of the Pythagorean philosophers.⁵ The friends made excursions to Pompeii and Baïes from Naples, but winter

17 September 1820, in Agnès Kettler, *Lettres de Ballanche à Madame Récamier* (Paris: Champion, 1996), 761, 497.

³ Herriot, *Madame Récamier et ses amis*, 2:145–151.

⁴ Ballanche to Beuchot, 19 April 1825, in BN, n.a.f. MS 5197, feuillet 244.

⁵ "La Grande Grèce est la patrie de cette philosophie poétique dont je crois être appelé à renouveler dans le monde le sentiment éteint." Ballanche to Récamier, 29 January 1824, in Kettler, *Lettres de Ballanche à Madame Récamier*, 534. A. J. George confuses Magna Graeca with Greece when he says that Ballanche and Dugas-Montbel "had planned to continue to Greece" (George, *Pierre-Simon Ballanche*, 93).

weather kept them from reaching Sicily. Actually, Ballanche, who missed Juliette terribly when separated from her, was quite happy to return to Rome after three weeks. He returned to Naples later in 1824 for a longer visit when Juliette decided that she wanted to summer there. It was during this second sojourn in Naples that Ballanche discovered the works of Giambattista Vico.⁶ In late February and early March 1825 Ballanche made a research trip to Tuscany; he spend most of his time in Pisa, but also visited libraries, book-sellers, and scholars in Florence, Livorno, and Lucca.

Récamier and Chateaubriand, who had been forced to resign from the Ministry in June 1824 after being implicated in a plot to oust Villèle, patched up their quarrel in the spring of 1825. Juliette, Amélie, and Ballanche left Rome on 20 April. The travellers separated in Geneva; the women continued on to Paris, while Ballanche turned aside to Lyon, where he stayed until the middle of July with his sister who was again seriously ill. As before, separation from Juliette and anxiety for his sister made him deeply unhappy in Lyon. But after the Roman idyll the prospect of Paris—and Chateaubriand—carried its own worries: “Rome est la ville du calme, Paris la ville d’agitation, Lyon la ville du cauchemar”.⁷ As Ballanche feared, Chateaubriand had reclaimed his place at the centre of the Abbaye-aux-Bois salon, though he was not permitted to dictate its political colouring. Indeed, strengthened by an augmented younger generation that now included J. J. Ampère, his friends Julius Mohl and Edgar Quinet, and Charles Lenormant (who had met Amélie Récamier in Naples and married her in February 1826), partisans of the Liberals were if anything slightly in the ascendant. Ballanche, once back in Paris, devoted himself to preparing for publication the first volumes of his *Essais de Palingénésie sociale*.

The plan of Palingénésie sociale

The “Dédicace” to *Prolégomènes*, and thus to the entire *Palingénésie sociale*, opens with the audacious declaration: “je veux exprimer la grande

⁶ Dugas-Montbel too was captivated by Vico, whose theses on the collective authorship of the Homeric poems he adopted in his critical edition (1828–1833) of the poems. Kettler, *Lettres de Ballanche à Madame Récamier*, 530 n. 3.

⁷ Ballanche to Amélie Récamier, 3 July 1825, in Kettler, *Lettres de Ballanche à Madame Récamier*, 782.

pensée de mon siècle”.⁸ This *grande pensée*, or ruling idea, is nothing other than Ballanche’s familiar theme of the necessary reorganization of the religio-social world after the chaos of the Revolutionary epoch: “Cette pensée dominante, profondément sympathique et religieuse, qui a reçu de Dieu même la mission auguste d’organiser le nouveau monde social. . . .”⁹ Ballanche intended *Palingénésie sociale* to present the theoretical and historical underpinnings of his blueprint for the reconstruction of European society, as well as to indicate the course that reconstruction should take in the immediate future. As elsewhere in *Palingénésie sociale*, the word *siècle* here designates not a measurement of astronomical time but a social cycle; that is, a phase of initiation.¹⁰ A century, in this sense, is a social age that ends not at a pre-determined date but when it has fulfilled its initiatory mission and accomplished a degree in the rehabilitation of humanity. *Palingénésie sociale* presents the meaning not of the literal nineteenth century but of the current palingenetic age. Ballanche’s declaration is not pure egotism because he would maintain that, strictly speaking, *Palingénésie sociale* does not represent his own ideas; rather, the *grande pensée* of his century lies unrecognized in the primitive traditions of the world and he has merely sought it out and now transmits it to his readers.

In a note opposite the title-page of the 1827 edition of *Prolégomènes* (Paris: Didot), Ballanche states that this volume is the first of the five volumes that will comprise his *Essais de Palingénésie sociale*. The contents of the remaining volumes are listed as: II *Orphée*, III *Formule générale de l’histoire de tous les peuples, appliquée à l’histoire du peuple romain*, IV *Ville des Expiations*, V *Elégie* and *Notes explicatives et complémentaires de tout l’ouvrage*. The note goes on to explain that the works comprising *Palingénésie sociale* will receive only limited and partial distribution because Ballanche does not regard his works as having attained their definitive form. They are to be regarded as “copies manuscrites d’un livre qui n’a pas reçu la dernière main, pour lequel on demande encore du temps, et sur-tout des conseils”. Ballanche, in short, is publishing these drafts in order to ease his own task of revision and to enable his friends to offer him their criticisms, rather than to present

⁸ OC, 4:3.

⁹ OC, 4:3.

¹⁰ Ballanche, “Formule générale. Deuxième fragment. L’année 259 de Rome” in *Revue de Paris*, 4 (1829): 144, 147.

his definitive ideas to the world. In fact, the 1827 *Prolegomènes* and the 1829 *Orphée* were published by Didot in a limited edition not for general sale. Ballanche's constant revision was not simply a matter of literary style. Believing that in his writings he was communicating the providential design for society, an awareness of the tremendous responsibility of the prophet weighed heavily on him; his obsession with revision derived from a sense of religious duty rather than artistic scruple. Ballanche continued to revise *Ville des Expiations* and *Formule générale* for the rest of his life, but was never sufficiently satisfied with their form as to permit their publication (although several excerpts from both were published in various journals in the early 1830s).

In 1829 Ballanche took up the project of a comprehensive edition of his works that would include both the complete *Palingénésie sociale* and his earlier works, which, with the exception of *Antigone*, were largely unknown to the general public. To this end, Ballanche drew up a prospectus for an *Oeuvres* in nine volumes. The prospectus shows that he intended the first four volumes to contain those of his works that had already been published: I *Antigone*, *L'Homme sans nom*, *Elégie*, *Fragments*; II *Essai sur les Institutions sociales*, *Le Vieillard et le jeune homme*; III *Prolegomènes pour Palingénésie sociale*; IV *Orphée*. The next three volumes were to contain the as yet unpublished parts of *Palingénésie sociale*: V *Formule générale*; VI and VII *Ville des Expiations* and *Elégie générale*. Volumes VIII and IX were slated to contain notes that would support and clarify the preceding volumes.¹¹ Ballanche had alluded to the projected volumes of notes, or *Preuves*, in *Prolegomènes*, where he had explained that their purpose was to establish connections between the various works of *Palingénésie sociale*, as well as between *Palingénésie sociale* and the works that preceded it, and to clarify obscurities and to smooth over apparent contradictions.¹² The nine volume project was never realized. In early 1830, however, perhaps aware that it would be some time before all the proposed works were completed to his satisfaction and desirous of bringing his extant works to the attention of a wider audience, Ballanche published an

¹¹ Prospectus, BML, MS 1806–1810, Dossier 5. This manuscript is undated, but a date of 1829 is certain. Ballanche listed in the prospectus the various editions of his published works. He mentions only two editions of *Antigone* (1814 and 1819); since a third edition was published in 1829, the prospectus cannot be later than 1829. Ballanche also states that the *Orphée* has been published, ruling out a date prior to early 1829.

¹² *OC*, 4:19–20, 285–288.

Oeuvres in four quarto volumes (Paris: Barbézat). This *Oeuvres* greatly extended Ballanche's renown and established him as an important literary and intellectual figure.

What, then, of *Palingénésie sociale* has been published? *Prolegomènes*, consisting of a "Dédicace", "Préface", and three parts, appeared in 1827. In Parts One and Three Ballanche discusses the principal ideas underlying *Palingénésie sociale*. Part Two comprises a set of specific introductions to *Orphée*, *Formule générale*, *Ville des Expiations*, and *Elégie*; that is, to the remaining volumes of *Palingénésie sociale*. (Since, however, Ballanche rarely kept his focus, each introduction covers a wide range of material.) Ballanche supplemented *Prolegomènes* by appending a "Première Addition aux *Prolegomènes*" to the 1830 *Oeuvres* edition. At the end of the "Première Addition" Ballanche notes that a "Seconde Addition" is to precede the *Formule générale*. In fact, the "Prologue" to *Formule générale* published in the *Revue de Paris* in May 1829 corresponds to the promised "Seconde Addition". No doubt, as Ballanche revised the later volumes of *Palingénésie sociale* he intended to supplement *Prolegomènes* with further additions.

Orphée, first published in 1829 as volume two of *Essais de Palingénésie sociale* (Paris: Didot), is an epic of the first fifteen centuries of human history. Set between the events narrated in the *Iliad* and the *Aeneid*, between, that is, the fall of Troy and the founding of Rome, it recounts the first phase of the rehabilitation of humanity through social evolution. The unifying theme of *Orphée*, such as it is, is the providentially-guided transmission of the general traditions of humanity from Egypt to Greece and then to Latium. In this way, "les vénérables traditions se succéderont sans être interrompues, et se perpétueront religieusement parmi les hommes".¹³ Orpheus represents, as in the normative Greek myth, the birth of the civil world. Ballanche's Orpheus is neither a mythological character nor a historical personage, but rather a symbol of humanity accomplishing the providential mission of its own creation.¹⁴ Given the didactic nature of Ballanche's writings, one ought not be surprised that there is no clear distinction in *Palingénésie sociale* between the works themselves and explanatory gloss. Indeed, Ballanche's practice of providing a running commentary on his epics has drawn from one critic the exasperated pronouncement that *Orphée* is not a myth, but a course in mythology.¹⁵

¹³ *OC*, 5:95.

¹⁴ *OC*, 4:94, 98.

¹⁵ Pierre Renauld, "Ballanche et Creuzer: Mythe et Symbole" in *Revue de littérature*

Malezieux's quip that the French are temperamentally unsuited for epic poetry rankled Ballanche, who, both by example (*Orphée*) and advocacy (*Institutions sociales* in *OC*, 2:326–334), propagated the view that the epic was the literary genre appropriate to the epochal events of his generation. Ballanche here speaks for French Romanticism; Lamartine, Vigny, Hugo, Quinet, George Sand, to speak only of major figures, all attempted to write the *Aeneid* of their age. "Pour les écrivains de cette génération, la plus haute forme de la poésie, c'est la vision qui totalise le temps, et donne un sens à l'histoire spirituelle de l'humanité."¹⁶ *Orphée* marks a transitional moment in European cultural hermeneutics: while continuing to locate Orpheus in a genealogy of wisdom as in the *prisca theologia* tradition of Christian hermeticism and Illuminism, Ballanche introduces the literary Orphism that will become one of the dominant themes of nineteenth-century French literature.¹⁷

Ballanche's correspondence with Bredin shows that a draft of *Orphée* was extant as early as 1817. Bredin refers to Ballanche's promise to send him the plan and "quelques morceaux" of *Orphée* in a letter dated 6 October 1817 (shortly after Ballanche had moved to Paris). Rather than some fragments, however, Ballanche dispatched a considerable portion of the work, as attested by the lengthy commentary Bredin wrote on it in March 1818.¹⁸ The early draft comprised only six books (the definitive version has nine) and certain episodes are missing.¹⁹ Ballanche's letters to Récamier show him working on *Orphée* in the autumn of 1817. The work had become a topic of conversation

comparée (1975): 612. Renauld is paraphrasing Sainte-Beuve: "le commentaire est entré dans le texte". Sainte-Beuve, *Portraits contemporains*, 5 vols. (Paris: Lévy, 1869–1871), 2:41.

¹⁶ Yves Vadé, *L'Enchantement littéraire: Ecriture et magie de Chateaubriand à Rimbaud* (Paris: Gallimard, 1990), 247. On the immense significance of Ballanche for the epic in French Romanticism, see Herbert J. Hunt, *The Epic in Nineteenth-Century France* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1941), passim, but especially 74–100; and Léon Cellier, *L'Epopée romantique* (Paris: PUF, 1954).

¹⁷ On Orpheus and the *prisca theologia*, see D. P. Walker, *The Ancient Theology* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1972) and Frances A. Yates, *Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1964); on literary Orphism, see Hermione B. Riffaterre, *L'Orphisme dans la poésie romantique* (Paris: Nizet, 1970), Brian Juden, *Traditions orphiques et tendances mystiques* (Paris: Klincksieck, 1971), and Léon Cellier, *Parcours Initiatiques* (Neuchâtel: à la Baconnière; Grenoble: Presses Universitaires de Grenoble, 1977).

¹⁸ Claude-Julien Bredin, *Correspondance philosophique et littéraire avec Ballanche*. Publiée et commentée par Auguste Viatte (Paris: Bocard, 1928), 33, 39–76. BML MSS 1806–1810, Dossier 10 includes parts of an early draft of *Orphée*.

¹⁹ See Kettler, *Lettres de Ballanche à Madame Récamier*, 239.

in Paris salons by 1820, and in that same year A. M. Ampère told Bredin that he had heard three passages from it (read by Ballanche?) and had been deeply moved.²⁰

Formule générale, depicting the struggle between plebeians and patricians at Rome as the archetypal history of human societies, was written subsequent to Ballanche's sojourn in Italy. Alone of his later works, that is, it did not exist in some form prior to 1823. Nevertheless, *Orphée* so obviously feeds into *Formule générale* that the latter must have been at least partially envisioned already. Book IX of *Orphée*, in fact, is subtitled "Cosmogonie Romaine", and the entire work points to Rome as the site of a major social transformation. No doubt the content of *Formule générale* was affected by Ballanche's Italian researches and his discovery of Vico, but his interest in Roman history and sense of its universal significance certainly pre-date his sojourn in Italy.

Ballanche found the core story of the plebeian secessions in the histories of Dionysios of Halicarnassus and Livy. The traditional dates of the three secessions, which punctuate the Struggle of the Orders at Rome, are 494–493, 449, and 287 BCE. Each time the plebeians withdrew from Rome to a neighbouring hill in order to pressure the patricians into granting them political and economic concessions. By this means the plebeians are said to have secured the establishment, respectively, of the tribunate, of certain civil rights, including the right of legal marriage, or *connubium*, and admission to the highest civil offices (the Hortensian Law). Only the third secession is historically certain, and the first is extremely doubtful. Livy's account of the three secessions may be found in his *History of Rome* (II: 31–33, III: 44–55, and XI [Book XI is lost, only a summary of its contents survives]). Dionysios of Halicarnassus, in his *Roman Antiquities* (VI: 45–90 and XI: 28–44), provides greater detail on the first two secessions, though his history ends before the time of the third secession and there is a lacuna in the text at the point of the second secession itself. Many of the details in *Formule générale* derive from Dionysios. A third classical source is Florus, a minor historian of the early second century CE who drew his brief sketch of Roman history from Livy. Ballanche, however, seized on Florus' characterization of the three plebeian secessions as the conquest of, respectively, *libertas*, *pudicitia*, and *dignitas*, which he then interpreted as self-awareness or conscience,

²⁰ Bredin to Ballanche, 15 April 1820, in Bredin, *Correspondance philosophique et littéraire avec Ballanche*, 111.

legal marriage or *connubium*, and the right to civil office.²¹ Despite his display of erudition, and he was genuinely learned in the classics, Ballanche freely rewrote these episodes from Roman history according to his theory of plebeian evolution. I shall make no attempt to indicate the numerous revisions Ballanche introduced into the classical accounts of the Struggle of the Orders at Rome. Modern accounts of the secessions known to Ballanche include those of Montesquieu (*The Spirit of the Laws*, II: 11, 12–15) and, most importantly, Vico (*New Science*, §§ 106–112 and *passim*). It was Vico, as Oscar Haac notes,²² who first linked the classical accounts of the three secessions to the historical evolution of plebeianism.

Though even before *Orphée* was published Ballanche reported that “le fantôme de mon troisième volume me poursuit et m’obsède,”²³ *Formule générale* was never completed. Substantial sections of it, however, have been published. Three excerpts, comprising the “Prologue” and “Première sécession plébéienne”, were published in the *Revue de Paris* (May, July, September 1829). A fragment of the “Seconde sécession plébéienne” appeared in *Le Siècle* (1833) and a complete version of it, except for the “Prologue”, in *L’Echo de la Jeune France* (November, December 1833, January 1834). Haac has published the complete “Seconde sécession plébéienne” under the title *La Théodécie et la Virginie romaine*. Of the “Troisième sécession plébéienne”, only a few fragments exist in manuscript (BML, MSS 1806–1810, Dossier 3). They are summarized and discussed by Haac. Sometime after 1840 Ballanche’s soi-disant disciple, Martial Guillemon, sketched a “Troisième sécession” and wrote a prologue and epilogue for it. Guillemon’s version is extant among Ballanche’s papers at the Bibliothèque Municipale de Lyon (Dossier 4). A hand-written note comments “M. Ballanche n’y trouvant aucune valeur”.

Ballanche’s first sketches for the *Ville des Expiations* date from 1816.²⁴ In August 1820 he described his project in detail to Récamier’s niece, Amélie:

²¹ OC, 4:172. See also *VH*, 28.

²² Ballanche, *La Théodécie et la Virginie romaine*, éd. Oscar A. Haac (Genève: Droz, 1959), 28.

²³ Ballanche to Récamier, [autumn 1828], in Kettler, *Lettres de Ballanche à Madame Récamier*, 555.

²⁴ Ballanche to Hautefeuille, 26 November 1845, in Alfred Marquiset, *Ballanche et Mme. d’Hautefeuille: Lettres inédites* (Paris: Champion, 1912), 247. Paul Bénichou, “Le Grand oeuvre de Ballanche: chronologie et inachèvement” in *Revue d’histoire littéraire de la France* 75 (1975): 738, corrects the erroneous date given by Rastoul and George.

Je viens de faire le plan d'un livre sur les Prisons. Dominé par la pensée que la peine de mort finira enfin par disparaître de nos codes barbares, je veux que l'on bâtit une ville qui sera appelée la ville des expiations. Cette ville sera destinée uniquement à recevoir tous les condamnés de la France.²⁵

In the same letter Ballanche insists that his project was no mere chimera; he planned to work with an architect in order to ensure that it was practicable. Part Three of *Prolégomènes* begins with a lengthy discussion of Joseph de Maistre (its opening sentence implies that it was written, at least in part, shortly after Maistre's death in 1821). In July 1821 Bredin remarked that Dugas-Montbel had told him that Ballanche was approaching his "ville de refuge" by means of a discussion of Maistre.²⁶ Bredin's letter suggests that Part Three of *Prolégomènes* is in some sense a draft of *Ville des Expiations* (as distinct from the prolegomenon to *Ville des Expiations*, properly speaking). Indeed, Part Three does discuss material fundamental to the latter work such as the coming decrease in social violence in general and the abolition of the death penalty in particular. The entire section, and by extension the *Ville des Expiations*, can, and perhaps ought, to be read as Ballanche's final response to Maistre. More generally, Ballanche intended in *Ville des Expiations* to discuss the character of the contemporary age: "Nous sommes arrivés aussi à une époque palingénésique, et la *Ville des Expiations* est un tableau par lequel j'ai voulu signaler les principales tendances de cette époque".²⁷ *Ville des Expiations* illustrates the demands of, and outlines responses to, the current phase of social evolution in France. The *Ville des Expiations* is to be both a place where people can go to fulfil a personal need for expiation, and an agent of regeneration for society as a whole. Within a few years of the founding of the *Ville*, Ballanche suggests, its inhabitants will form a regenerated colony that will act as a haven for the regeneration of European society. Formerly, decadent societies were destroyed by inundations of barbarians. Now, corresponding to the present stage of social evolution, the destructive mission of the barbarian hordes has been replaced by the constructive mission of colonists from the *Ville des Expiations*.²⁸

²⁵ Ballanche to Amélie Récamier, 26 August 1820, in Kettler, *Lettres de Ballanche à Madame Récamier*, 757.

²⁶ Bredin to Ballanche, 27 July 1821, in Bredin, *Correspondance philosophique et littéraire avec Ballanche*, 156.

²⁷ *OC*, 4:271.

²⁸ *VE*, 45, 58.

Ballanche's friends followed the progress of the work with interest: "J'attends cette ville de refuge où mon mystérieux ami soulèvera un coin du voile".²⁹ In 1823 Bredin rejoiced at its apparent completion: "Et cette *Ville*! elle est toute bâtie".³⁰ Evidently, it was not so to Ballanche's satisfaction, for he worked at *Ville des Expiations* on and off for the rest of his life without, as we know, ever consenting to its publication. It was, however, largely complete, and three editions of it have been published in the twentieth century. Ballanche himself published several fragments of *Ville des Expiations* between 1832 and 1835 in *La France Littéraire* and the *Revue du progrès social*. In preparing these extracts for publication, he added references to the July Revolution and the conditions of the early July Monarchy. As Bénichou notes, the published fragments of *Ville des Expiations* fall into two distinct groups: those dealing with the abolition of the death penalty and those describing the organization of the city and the mystical doctrine that rules it.³¹ The notes to the edition of *Ville des Expiations* prepared by Derré's team provide an excellent guide to the reforms to the penal code and the debate over the death penalty in the early 1830s. The recent interest in utopias and, thanks to Michel Foucault's *Surveiller et punir* (1975), the history of penal theory has made *Ville des Expiations* the most studied of Ballanche's works.³²

The *Elégie* that was to have concluded *Palingénésie sociale* is not the *Elégie* on the death of the duc de Berry, but rather a separate work that Ballanche sometimes called the *Elégie générale*, fragments of which have been published by Derré et al. under the title *Seconde Elégie*.³³ This work is closely related to *Ville des Expiations* as both are devoted to the present palingenetic epoch. *Ville des Expiations* depicts the means

²⁹ Bredin to Ballanche, 27 July 1821, in Bredin, *Correspondance philosophique et littéraire avec Ballanche*, 156.

³⁰ Bredin to Ballanche, 25 February 1823, in Bredin, *Correspondance philosophique et littéraire avec Ballanche*, 212.

³¹ Bénichou, "Le Grand oeuvre de Ballanche", 739.

³² See Jean-René Derré, "Lumières, Illuminisme chrétien, et pensée mystique dans la *Ville des Expiations*" in *Lumières et Illuminisme*, ed. Mario Matucci (Pisa: Pacini, 1984); Pierre Emmanuel, "Avec Ballanche dans la Ville des Expiations" in *Le monde est intérieur* (Paris: Seuil, 1967); and the articles by R.-P. Colin, L. Czyba, M. Nathan and P. Michel, and L. Rétat collected in J.-R. Derré, dir., *Dossier de La Ville des Expiations de Ballanche* (Paris: CNRS, 1981).

³³ Ballanche, *Ville des Expiations et autres textes*, éd. J.-R. Derré (Lyon: Presses Universitaires de Lyon, 1981), 141–151. The text published here as *Seconde Elégie* was reconstructed from notes scattered among various dossiers of Ballanche's manuscripts at the BML and from fragments of it that Ballanche included in his article "Mémoires de M. de Chateaubriand" in *Revue européenne* 8 (1834): 227–241.

of achieving the social harmony that will be the end result of the latest stage in the social evolution of humanity, while *Elégie* was to have described the suffering occasioned by the current evolutionary crisis on the way to its happy resolution:

L'*Elégie* est destinée à représenter le moment de transition, moment si cruel pour l'homme qui sent toute sa nature ébranlée. J'a voulu peindre ce malaise général qui saisit les peuples dans ces jours dont la mémoire est ensuite consacrée par des solennités publiques, dans ces jours de fin et rénovation où les anciennes croyances sociales s'éteignent pour être remplacées par des nouvelles croyances, où une partie des hommes vit encore dans le passé, pendant que l'autre s'avance vers l'avenir (*OC*, 4:271).

The idea of this second *Elégie* dates from the months Ballanche spent in Lyon during the second half of 1820.³⁴ It reflects his anxieties over the end of the liberal Restoration and the increasing repression of the European powers, as well as his sadness over his sister's sufferings:

En vérité, cette vie est déplorable; et, par un concours singulier de circonstances, tout ce qu'il y a de malaise dans l'époque actuelle pèse sur moi avec une vivacité singulière. Aussi je crois la bien connaître. Je la sens comme dans de certaines maladies on sent les variations de l'atmosphère. C'est de la souffrance que cela. Si je puis un jour écrire ces choses, ce sera une véritable élégie.³⁵

While we are therefore missing Ballanche's final word on his own epoch, *Elégie* would not have been something entirely new. In fact, it would have reworked the ideas of his 1818–1820 works. Further, the basic ideas of *Elégie* are set out in the section of *Prolégomènes* devoted to it (*Palingénésie sociale* is like an enormous painting-by-numbers; even where Ballanche has not coloured it in, *Prolégomènes* provides the reader with the outline and a set of numbers and corresponding colours so that the reader may fill in the general sense, if not every detail, him or herself). *Elégie*, “une peinture de la chrysalide sociale actuelle”,³⁶ was to have depicted the present age of crisis and provided encouragement for those who must live through it. For example, Ballanche notes that the works of Nicolas-Antoine Boulanger, in the sphere of history, and of Byron, in the sphere of poetry, are modern apocalypses.

³⁴ Kettler, *Lettres de Ballanche à Madame Récamier*, 134.

³⁵ Ballanche to Récamier, 23 October 1820, in Kettler, *Lettres de Ballanche à Madame Récamier*, 504.

³⁶ *OC*, 4:284.

Deprived of the hope of immortality and refusing the promise of rehabilitation, Boulanger and Byron see only the suffering and anarchy of periods of end and are blind to their concomitant renewal.³⁷ *Elégie* was to have provided the antidote to these dangerous works by showing that the obverse of contemporary suffering is social evolutionary progress. In an 1832 article, Ballanche describes *Elégie* as “une Elégie générale, et termine tout: c’est le chant funèbre d’une société condamnée par la Providence, et qui l’homme ne peut rappeler à la vie”. Ballanche adds that he has already sounded this theme in *Institutions sociales*.³⁸ Echoing Isaiah and Job, Ballanche bewails the suffering and tests of faith that mark the destruction of old Europe and concludes with a call for Europe to place its faith in providence. The tone of the article is darker than is customary for Ballanche; he knows that God is preparing the birth of a new society but he does not seem confident that humanity will respond. Perhaps the pessimism of this article relates to the fact that it was written after the July Revolution, an event that sorely troubled Ballanche and revived his 1820 anxieties over the immediate direction of Europe.

In early summer 1831 Ballanche published the *Vision d’Hébal: chef d’un clan écossais*. The *Vision* is actually chapter VIII of *Ville des Expiations*, which, according to the “Avertissement” at the beginning of *Vision*, was at that moment in press along with the *Formule générale*. These two works, volumes V and VI of the nine volume *Oeuvres* outlined in 1829, were to appear shortly, but in the meantime Ballanche was offering *Vision d’Hébal* to the subscribers to his (1830) *Oeuvres* as a token of his work in progress. According to Sainte-Beuve, *Vision d’Hébal* was conceived in 1824 and composed in 1829. Busst adds that Ballanche must have made a few additions to it in 1831, since the work makes occasional references to the July Revolution.³⁹ The *Vision d’Hébal*, described in *Ville des Expiations* as a poem translated

³⁷ OC, 4:273. In OC, 4:210 Ballanche explains that the suffering attendant on ages of end and renewal reawakens apocalyptic traditions; yet apocalyptic writings are threats, not true prophecies. Ballanche later changed his mind about Byron. See Arthur McCalla, “Byron and Ballanche’s Historical Theodicy” in *Nineteenth-Century French Studies* 22 (1994): 379–390.

³⁸ Ballanche, “Palingénésie sociale: Epilogue” in *La France littéraire* 1 (1832): 242. This article corresponds exactly to the “Epilogue” to *Ville des Expiations* published by Falque (1907) and has been reprinted by Derré et al. as the *Dernier Epilogue* in *Ville des Expiations et autres textes*, 153–158. This passage is quoted and discussed in Bénichou, “Le Grand oeuvre de Ballanche”, 740.

³⁹ Sainte-Beuve, *Portraits contemporains*, 39; *VH*, 12.

from the sacred language of the esoteric city, is a mystical vision of the entire course of human history, culminating in the total assimilation of humanity to God. The name “Hébal”, while conveniently an anagram of the first three and the final two letters of “Bal(lanc)he”, derives from the biblical Mount Hébal (in English, Ebal). Deuteronomy 11:29 (and Joshua 8:33) identifies Mount Gerizim as the mountain of the blessings of the people of Israel and Mount Ebal as the mountain of the curses against Israel’s enemies. Ballanche found the name “Hébal” in Louis-Claude de Saint-Martin’s appropriation of the biblical passage in *L’Homme de désir*: “Mais la parole en se réveillant partagera le monde en deux classes comme autrefois les Hébreux furent partagés sur Hébal et sur Garizim; et les voix d’Hébal prononceront sans cesse la malédiction contre les ennemis de la loi du Seigneur”.⁴⁰ He then transferred to Hébal the nature of Gerizim; *Vision d’Hébal* is a vision not of curses but of blessings.

Ballanche frequently insists on the unity of *Palingénésie sociale*: it “est parfaitement un, parfaitement identique, parfaitement homogène”.⁴¹ And again:

la *Palingénésie sociale* présente une sorte de trilogie, sous le rapport de l’unité générale, et par la raison encore qui si ce n’est pas la même action continuée, c’est la même pensée, le même sentiment, à divers degrés, revêtus de formes différentes (*OC*, 4:17–18).

Palingénésie sociale, then, forms a trilogy, a trilogy, moreover, whose tripartite structure reflects the very nature of the temporal order.

Le présent, le passé, l’avenir, relativement à la société en général, peuvent donc, à toutes les époques, et sur-tout aux époques de fin et renouvellement, offrir le sujet de trois épopées réunies par une pensée unique, ancienne dans un ordre de choses et d’idées, nouvelle dans un autre ordre, et néanmoins toujours identique et toujours homogène; et ces trois épopées ainsi réunies ne formeraient qu’une seule et vaste trilogie. C’est ce que j’ai entrepris pour la société actuelle, héritière elle-même de tant de sociétés antérieures, façonnée par tant d’états préparatoires, et qui subit en ce moment la douloureuse épreuve d’une immense transformation (*OC*, 4:4–5).

Élégie corresponds to the present, *Orphée* to the past, and *Ville des Expiations* to the future. Together, the works of *Palingénésie sociale* com-

⁴⁰ Saint-Martin, *L’Homme de désir*, éd. Robert Amadou (Paris: Rocher, 1979), 323. See Kettler, *Lettres de Ballanche à Madame Récamier*, 64.

⁴¹ *OC*, 4: 20.

prise a vast epic of contemporary society that depicts its origins in the social evolution of the past, its future transformation, and the suffering that must now be endured in order to effect this transformation. If *Palingénésie sociale* forms a trilogy, why did *Prolégomènes* introduce four works, rather than three? The exclusion of *Formule générale* from the basic epic cycle does not mean that Ballanche considered it to be marginal to his project. Rather, *Formule générale*, like *Prolégomènes* itself, is supporting apparatus to the core trilogy.

Ballanche asserts that *Palingénésie sociale* stands to its century as Dante's *Divine Comedy* stood to its century. Both epic cycles depict the ruling idea of their ages; Dante's trilogy embodied the harsh, dogmatic Christianity of the Middle Ages, whereas *Palingénésie sociale* embodies the progressive Christianity of the contemporary era. Symbolic forms, like social orders, are rendered obsolete by the progress of the human race; Ballanche succeeds Dante just as modern liberties have succeeded feudalism. And Ballanche, to complete the parallel, has his Beatrix—Juliette Récamier, of course—, to whom *Palingénésie sociale* is dedicated.⁴²

⁴² OC, 4:4–8. Recalling his first meeting with her in 1812, Ballanche spoke of Récamier in the language of *La Vita nuova* as having transformed his life from one of sorrow to one of joy; here, she is assimilated to the psychopomp of the *Divine Comedy* as the one who made the celestial glories accessible to him.

CHAPTER NINE

PALINGENESIS

The rubric under which Ballanche to present the ruling idea of his century is *social palingenesis*. While acknowledging the felicity of a term relating to evolution, and social evolution at that, as the battle-cry of someone claiming to hold the key to the zeitgeist of the nineteenth century, we must examine exactly what Ballanche understood by palingenesis. In the course of our examination, the significance of its modifier will also be clarified. Ballanche, as he tells us himself,¹ discovered the term *palingénésie* in Charles Bonnet's *Palingénésie philosophique, ou idées sur l'état futur des êtres vivants* (1769). I shall discuss Bonnet (1720–1793) in some detail because the place of palingenesis in Ballanche's philosophy of history is fully comprehensible only in light of Bonnet's theory.

Palingénésie philosophique

Bonnet used the term “*palingénésie*”, whose root meaning is “rebirth”, to denote his preformationist explanation of generation. Preformationism explained how the structure of living beings is preserved and transmitted through generation at a moment in the history of science when the activity of occult forces that had been evoked to account for spontaneous generation had been driven off the field by the seventeenth century's demand for the operation of mechanical laws but before the embryology and cell theory of the late eighteenth and nineteenth century had redefined reproduction as the gradual formation of an organism by another organism through the proliferation of cells.² In *Palingénésie philosophique*, Bonnet maintains that living beings contain in themselves, like the germ in a seed, tiny preformed structures that are inert but otherwise exact miniature replicas of

¹ *OC*, 4:9.

² See François Jacob, *The Logic of Life: A History of Heredity*, trans. Betty Spillmann (New York: Pantheon, 1973), 52–66.

themselves. At the moment of fertilization, the inert structure waiting in the germ is activated and starts growing, gradually expanding in all directions until it has become in full size what it already was in miniature.³ If the positing of mysterious formative virtues is to be avoided, the germs of all organisms must have been formed at the beginning. Accordingly, in *Considérations sur les corps organisés* (1762), Bonnet argues that at the creation of the world all future generations of living things were encapsulated in a set of primordial germs. The germs of all future generations of apple-trees, for example, were contained within the first apple-tree created on the third day of Creation. The germs of all descendants lie encased in each other like Russian dolls:

Pour moi, j'aime à reculer le plus qu'il m'est possible, les bornes de la création. Je me plais à considérer cette magnifique suite d'Étres organisés, renfermés comme autant de petits mondes, les uns dans les autres. . . . Je goûte une secrète satisfaction à contempler dans un gland le germe d'où naître, dans quelques siècles, le Chêne majestueux.⁴

This is Bonnet's doctrine of *emboîtement*, or encasement. Though convinced of its correctness, Bonnet always insisted on recognizing the hypothetical status of the doctrine of encasement: "Je n'ai pas décidé entre l'hypothèse de l'emboîtement et celle de la dissémination des germes. J'ai seulement donné à entendre que j'inclinai vers l'emboîtement et j'ai indiqué les raisons qui m'ont paru favoriser cette hypothèse".⁵

Preformationist generation, producing endless copies of a given species, permits neither change nor variation. The apple-tree that blossoms on the last day of the world and the apple-tree that stood in the garden of Eden will be identical because both are generated from the germ created once and for all at the beginning of time. Preformationism admits no history, only waiting. Nevertheless, Bonnet's system is not static. He introduces development into his system through the concept of palingenesis, with its double sense of rebirth and regeneration.⁶ Bonnet asked himself what part of a being survives death,

³ Charles Bonnet, *Palingénésie philosophique* in *Oeuvres d'histoire naturelle et de philosophie*, 8 vols. (Neuchâtel: 1770–1783), 7:267.

⁴ Bonnet, *Considérations sur les corps organisés* in *Oeuvres*, 3:75.

⁵ Charles Bonnet, *Tableau des Considérations sur les corps organisés, ou Exposition succincte des principes de l'Auteur sur la Génération et sur le Développement* in *Oeuvres*, 7:71. Bonnet directs the reader to *Considérations sur les corps organisés*, *Oeuvres*, 3:266, 479.

⁶ See Jacques Marx, "L'Idée de palingénésie chez Joseph de Maistre" in *Revue des*

and how resurrection can be explained naturalistically within a preformationist paradigm. He concluded that it is not the original preformed germ that is subject to palingenesis and so survives death, but a second preformed structure, a tiny indestructible body that Bonnet considered the seat of the soul and that he named the “germ of restitution.” Bonnet believed the germ of restitution to be perceivable, if only one possessed sufficiently powerful instruments of observation.⁷ Memory, for Bonnet, is a physical phenomenon and the key to personality. His particular concern was that memory should survive death. More generally, he refused to separate the spiritual dimension of beings from their physiological nature.⁸ The germ of restitution, he concluded, is the link between both the physical and spiritual aspects of humanity and this life and future lives. St. Paul had used the metaphor of the seed in his discussion of the glorious body of the resurrected dead in I Corinthians 15. The preformationist theory of palingenesis worked out by Bonnet, who echoes Paul’s language in his own discussion of the culmination of human development in *Palingénésie philosophique*,⁹ translates the Pauline metaphor into scientific language.

Bonnet’s philosophical palingenesis, then, proposes a series of resurrections understood as successive unfoldings of the germ of restitution. Though these serial rebirths do not in themselves secure Bonnet’s theory from the charge of stasis, because rebirth in a preformationist universe is mere replication, Bonnet’s palingenetic series does entail a sort of development because the world in which it plays itself out undergoes change. Bonnet posits a series of “revolutions of the globe”, or physical catastrophes, that so massively reshape the earth that each revolution is like a new creation. He daringly suggests that the Creation account in Genesis records not the original creation but only the most recent of the numerous revolutions to which our planet has been subjected. The bodies of all living creatures are destroyed in the periodic catastrophes, but the germs of restitution of each species survive and the various species reappear when the earth is again habitable. Species, however, do not reappear exactly as they were

Etudes maistriennes 5–6 (1980): 113–14. On palingenesis as a scientific doctrine in the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries, see Jacques Marx, “Alchimie et Palingénésie” in *Isis* 62 (1971): 275–89.

⁷ Bonnet, *Palingénésie philosophique* in *Oeuvres*, 7:240–242, 247.

⁸ Bonnet, *Palingénésie philosophique* in *Oeuvres*, 7:134, 230, 367.

⁹ Bonnet, *Palingénésie philosophique* in *Oeuvres*, 7:670, 673. See also Marx, “Alchimie et Palingénésie”, 282.

before the catastrophe because the world has changed, and species must correspond to the world they inhabit. Bonnet expects the present earth and the appearance of its denizens to be so changed as to be unrecognizable after the next catastrophe.¹⁰ One must not think of the transformation of species as a process of adaptation in the Darwinian sense because it is not a matter of environmental change followed by reactive adaptation on the part of species. Rather, in Bonnet's preformationist universe, which here reflects Leibnitz's doctrine of the divinely preestablished harmony among all substances of the universe, both the sequence of the revolutions of the globe and the germs of the various species have been preformed, and the two sets of preformations have been coordinated by their Creator. That is, the unfolding of the germs of the various species has been providentially programmed to coincide with the unfolding of the successive catastrophes: "Je conçois donc que les germes de tous les êtres organisés ont été originairement construits ou calculés sur des rapports déterminés aux diverses révolutions que notre planète devoit subir".¹¹ It is a matter of parallel but independent timetables; catastrophes do not *cause* changes in species.

Bonnet is careful to insist that the unfolding of species, including humanity, adds nothing that was not already contained in the original germ: "L'homme a donc son essence comme tout ce qui est ou peut être. . . . Les essences sont immuable. Chaque chose est ce qu'elle est. Si elle changeoit essentiellement, elle ne seroit plus cette chose: elle seroit une autre chose essentiellement différente".¹² The relation of Bonnet's preformationism to the principle of plenitude is evident. For a species to change would be to abandon its place in the chain of being, thereby leaving a gap in the chain. And since the chain of being reflects the perfection of its divine creator, its links must be as imperceptible as possible, precluding the possibility of lacunae:¹³ "Entre le degré le plus bas et le degré le plus élevé de la perfection corporelle ou spirituelle, il est un nombre presque infini de degrés intermédiaires. Le suite de ces degrés compose la *chaîne universelle*. Elle unit tous les êtres, lie tous les mondes, embrasse toutes les sphères. Un seul Etre est hors de cette chaîne, et Celui qui la faite".¹⁴

¹⁰ Bonnet, *Palingénésie philosophique* in *Oeuvres*, 7:119–122, 182, 190.

¹¹ Bonnet, *Palingénésie philosophique* in *Oeuvres*, 7:186.

¹² Bonnet, *Palingénésie philosophique* in *Oeuvres*, 7:414.

¹³ Plenitude and the chain of being are discussed in Arthur O. Lovejoy, *The Great Chain of Being* (New York: Harper, 1960).

¹⁴ Bonnet, *La Contemplation de la Nature* in *Oeuvres*, 4:34.

The modifications undergone by species are neither random nor directionless. The succession of catastrophes and restitutions both produces biological refinements and restores fallen creation. Bonnet's chain of being extends beyond the physical world up through the spiritual world of celestial hierarchies toward its Creator. Though the beings presently at the highest point of the chain fall well short of divine perfection, the gap, while ultimately unbridgeable, is steadily narrowing. The entire chain advances toward God as the pre-programmed catastrophes play themselves out and as species unfold in greater biological complexity and spiritual perfection.

As the chain of being advances each of its links maintains its distinction from neighbouring links:

La même progression que nous découvrons aujourd'hui entre les différens ordres d'êtres organisés, s'observera, sans doute, dans l'état futur de notre globe: mais, elle suivra d'autres proportions qui seront déterminées par le degré de perfectibilité de chaque espèce. L'homme, transporté alors dans un autre séjour plus assorti à l'éminence de ses facultés, laissera au singe ou à l'éléphant cette première place qu'il occupoit parmi les animaux de notre planète. Dans cette restitution universelle des animaux il pourra donc se trouver chez les singes ou les éléphants des Newton et des Leibnitz; chez les castors, des Perrault et des Vaubon, etc.

Les espèces les plus inférieures, comme les huitres, les polyps, etc. seront aux espèces les plus élevées de cette nouvelle hiérarchie, comme les oiseaux et les quadrupèdes sont à l'homme dans l'hiérarchie actuelle.

Peut-être encore qu'il y aura un progrès continuel et plus ou moins lent de toutes les espèces vers une perfection supérieure; ensorte que tous les degrés de l'échelle seront continuellement variable dans un rapport déterminé et constant: je veux dire, que la mutabilité de chaque degré aura toujours sa raison dans le degré qui aura précédé immédiatement.¹⁵

As one species, that is, in the process of perfecting itself attains the degree of complexity possessed before hand by the species one step higher, the latter is not thereby overtaken because, carried onward by the same momentum, it cannot avoid perfecting itself to an equivalent degree, and so on throughout the entire length of the chain. Bonnet thereby temporalizes the chain of being. This is not, as Michel Foucault has remarked, evolution in the modern sense, but rather the sequential displacement of a taxonomy whose static, hierarchical internal structure remains unchanged by its temporalization.¹⁶ Bonnet

¹⁵ Bonnet, *Palingénésie philosophique* in *Oeuvres*, 7:149–150.

¹⁶ Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things* (New York: Vintage, 1973), 151.

never suggests that apes evolve *into* human beings; rather, apes and human beings occupy, as they have always occupied and will always occupy, neighbouring but inviolable spaces in the chain. It is precisely because Bonnet never considered the possibility of the descent of human beings from lower primates that he could associate the two so closely in his graduated scale and not call into question the traditional Christian anthropology.¹⁷ Nevertheless, Bonnet describes the sequence of palingeneses by which the chain rises toward biological complexity and spiritual perfection as “*évolution*”; in fact, he was one of the first naturalists to speak of biological evolution. In what sense, then, can evolution be compatible with preformationism? It is a question of what was meant by evolution in the late eighteenth century. The Latin root *evolvere* means to unroll or unfold; its noun, *evolutio*, referring to the unrolling of a scroll, acquired the meaning of “to read”. Eighteenth-century natural historians, retaining the sense of unrolling, applied the term *evolutio* to the successive unfolding of preformed structures encased in germs.¹⁸ Evolution is here a synonym for the preformationist theory of generation. Picking up the sense of the Latin substantive, one may say that Bonnet’s theory of evolution reads the Book of Creation as the unfolding of its pre-programmed course. Bonnet himself, in *Palingénésie philosophique*, refers to the Earth and to other worlds as books, which together comprise “cette immense bibliothèque de l’Univers”.¹⁹

Another eighteenth-century use of *evolution* is discussed by Ernst Benz in his study of the theosophical sources of German Idealism. Drawing on emanationist philosophy, Jakob Boehme and Friedrich Christoph Oetinger worked out a conception of creation as a process of divine self-manifestation; that is, creation is not the result of a single act of divine will, but a continuous emanation. Corresponding to the out-going emanative process, Boehme and Oetinger posited a process of return, by which creation is redeemed by coming to realize its identity with the divine. “Evolution” describes the in-going moment of the cycle of emanation and return from the perspective of creation; it is the progressive realization of the identity of creation with God. The term evolution, Benz concludes, was first introduced

¹⁷ Lorin Anderson, *Bonnet and the Order of the Known* (Dordrecht: Reidel, 1982), 34–35.

¹⁸ Lovejoy, *The Great Chain of Being*, 243.

¹⁹ Bonnet, *Palingénésie philosophique* in *Oeuvres*, 7:332, 365.

as a theological and soteriological term by the theosophs of the eighteenth century.²⁰ Bonnet rejects the principle of divine emanation, insisting on an unbridgeable gap between God and creation, thus breaking the respiratory rhythm of Boehme and Oetinger's out-going and in-going. Nevertheless, his conception of evolution as progression through terrestrial and celestial hierarchies toward God clearly shares the soteriological, if not the cosmogonic, content of the theosophs' notion. Evolution in the eighteenth century, then, was as much a theological as a scientific term.

Foucault's critique (reiterated by Lorin Anderson) of Bonnet's notion of evolution as static (a *taxonomia* that includes time)²¹ short-changes its progressivism by ignoring this soteriological dimension. Preformationist generation does not, it is true, permit adaptive change; yet, Bonnet's palingenetic schema, while retaining the internal taxonomic stasis identified by Foucault, permits genuine progress inasmuch as the biological complexity and spiritual perfection of all creation increase as the chain mounts toward God. It is not, as Foucault asserts, that Bonnet's palingenesis is absolutely opposed to evolutionism; it is that his model of evolution is internalist rather than externalist:

Evolutionary theories of change are fundamentally internalist or externalist. The classical internalist theories propose a push from within the organism. . . . Darwin's theory of natural selection, by contrast, is basically externalist: environments change, setting new pressures of natural selection, and organisms adapt. Darwinian evolution is adaptation to changing local environments, not inherent progress or inherent anything.²²

Bonnet's palingenesis, while not development according to the externalist, scientific model of evolution founded by Darwin, ranks as a "classical internalist theory" of development: a program placed in the germs at the Creation unfolds in its divinely preordained pattern. As such, Bonnet's philosophical palingenesis is a naturalistic explanation of resurrection. That is, given the extant belief in resurrection received as a datum of faith, Bonnet provides an explanation for it that requires no supernatural intervention or suspension of the physical laws governing the universe. Bonnet's achievement, as his contempo-

²⁰ Ernst Benz, *Les Sources mystiques de la philosophie romantique allemande* (Paris: Vrin, 1987 [1968]), 58.

²¹ Foucault, *The Order of Things*, 152.

²² Stephen Jay Gould, *The New York Review* (18 January 1990), 27.

aries noted, was not accomplished without some violence to Christian orthodoxy, for which *Palingénésie philosophique* was briefly barred from France. In place of a radical difference between this life and the next, between this life as a sojourn in the physical world followed by eternity in a spiritual realm, Bonnet offers an innumerable series of terrestrial lives in which there is no other reward than the progress effected from life to life.²³

However heterodox his ideas, Bonnet remained deeply religious. Convinced that sound philosophy cannot contradict sound theology, he sees no conflict between natural philosophy and theology or revelation.²⁴ The Protestant Bonnet defends the truth of revelation by means of a version of the Thomist doctrine that revelation completes reason based on the principle of plenitude. Human faculties, he declares, are incapable of providing certitude of the life to come; they are disproportionate with the nature of things. Hence, extraordinary means are needed to lead us to this certitude. But if this means were the granting to humanity of new faculties, then humanity would no longer be humanity but something else, and there would be a gap in the chain of being. Certitude must be achieved without changing humanity, and it is this that revelation, assisted by miracles, accomplishes. Revelation is commensurate with humanity's place in the chain of being.²⁵ In practice, though, Bonnet limits the authority of revelation on the grounds that God has revealed to humanity only what it cannot discover by the exercise of its own intelligence.²⁶

Bonnet's faith manifests itself principally in his conception of his philosophical palingenesis as a form of worship, of coming to know God through understanding his creation. The spirit of Leibnitz hovers over *Palingénésie philosophique*. In Book VII, Bonnet discusses in detail Leibnitz's ideas on preformationism as set out in his *Theodicy: Essays on the Goodness of God, the Freedom of Man, and the Origin of Evil* (Amsterdam: 1710). And though he there rejects, respectfully, Leibnitz's theory of the envelopment of germs in favour of his own theory of germs of restitution as a surer guarantor of resurrection, Bonnet wholeheartedly embraces Leibnitz's basic philosophical optimism. Leibnitz's theodicy, though not explicitly discussed, is assumed throughout *Palingénésie*

²³ Anderson, *Bonnet and the Order of the Known*, 24–25.

²⁴ Bonnet, *Palingénésie philosophique* in *Oeuvres*, 7:381.

²⁵ Bonnet, *Palingénésie philosophique* in *Oeuvres*, 7:632–633.

²⁶ Bonnet, *Palingénésie philosophique* in *Oeuvres*, 7:125.

philosophique, and, indeed, all of Bonnet's works: the world, as the creation of a benevolent and omnipotent God, possesses all the perfection and goodness possible.²⁷ Bonnet's theory of palingenesis demonstrates that all suffering is part of the unfolding of progressively greater happiness as planned by God from the beginning. No suffering, in animals no less than in humans, is needless. Bonnet, like Tennyson, "trusts that not one life shall be destroyed, or cast as rubbish to the void", because the palingenesis of germs of restitution ensures that "[r]ien ne se perd dans les immenses magasins de la nature; tout y a son emploi, sa fin et la meilleure fin possible".²⁸ Once humanity reaches the culmination of its palingenetic rise, and, understanding much that is at present beyond its faculties, looks back on its history, it will no longer be troubled by the problem of evil:

Un mot de cette page nous tracera aussi notre propre histoire et nous développera le pourquoi et le comment de ces calamités, de ces épreuves, de ces privations qui exercent souvent ici-bas la patience du juste, épurent son âme, rehaussent ses vertues, ébranlent et terrassent les foibles. Parvenus à ce degré si supérieur de connaissances, l'origine du mal physique et du mal moral ne nous embarrassera plus: nous les envisagerons distinctement dans leur force et dans leur effets les plus éloignés; et nous reconnoîtrons avec évidence *que tout ce que Dieu avait fait était bien*.²⁹

The religious emotion that pervades Bonnet's scientific writings reaches a crescendo in chapter XXII of *Palingénésie philosophique*, in which description of the culmination of the evolution of the chain of being metamorphoses into celebration of the wisdom of its maker.

Bonnet's philosophical palingenesis reconceptualizes Christian teleology in the language of biological preformationism; it draws its model of development not from science but from theology. It is precisely in this sense that Georges Canguilhem identifies philosophical palingenesis as a scientific ideology; that is, an explanatory system applied to natural history but derived from a field external to the life sciences, namely, Christian theology.³⁰

²⁷ For example, *Palingénésie philosophique* in *Oeuvres*, 7:127–128; *Contemplation de la Nature* in *Oeuvres*, 4:4.

²⁸ Bonnet, *Palingénésie philosophique* in *Oeuvres*, 7:152. See also 7:177, 406.

²⁹ Bonnet, *Palingénésie philosophique* in *Oeuvres*, 7:667.

³⁰ Georges Canguilhem, "What Is a Scientific Ideology?" in *Ideology and Rationality in the History of the Life Sciences*, trans. Arthur Goldhammer (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1988), 38.

Natural history and the history of humanity

Bonnet's philosophical palingenesis had become marginal to debates of natural historians by the early nineteenth century. His chain of being was subjected to concentrated attack, led from 1782 by L.-J.-M. Daubenton from his Chair in Natural History at the Collège de France, for both the specific idea that all animals could be arranged in a single linear sequence and for its speculative nature.³¹ Daubenton's strictures against Bonnet were taken up by Georges Cuvier. Though he inclined toward preformationism on the question of generation and proposed his own theory of "revolutions of the globe", Cuvier's empiricism and his concomitant campaign against speculation made him an implacable opponent of Bonnet's philosophical palingenesis. In his "Eloge historique de Charles Bonnet", read to the Académie des sciences in 1810, Cuvier attributed Bonnet's chain of being to his fatal error of turning from empirical taxonomic investigation to speculative philosophy. Similarly, in his influential *Recherches sur les ossements fossiles de quadrupèdes* (1812), Cuvier interrupted his classificatory labours to reiterate the cautionary tale offered by Bonnet's abandonment of patient observation.³² Not all natural historians of the early nineteenth century accepted Cuvier's disparagement of Bonnet. Jean-Baptiste Lamarck, while radicalizing Bonnet's animal series by introducing transformism into it,³³ explicitly filiated his doctrine to Bonnet's chain of being in *Philosophie zoologique* (1809).³⁴ Yet, Lamarck's transformism, crushed, in the eyes of contemporaries, by Cuvier's fixism, had little currency among natural historians. More influential, though less explicit about the affinity of his ideas to those of Bonnet, was Etienne Geoffroy Saint-Hilaire. Like Bonnet's *Palingénésie philosophique*, Geoffroy's *Anatomie philosophique* (1818) applied to zoology the Leibnizian principle of preestablished harmony. Basing his theory on anatomical homologies between classes of vertebrates, and ultimately of insects and crustacea as well, Geoffroy defended the idea of the organic unity of species. Deeming Cuvier's empiricism restrictive, he also advocated the need for theory in science.

³¹ Toby A. Appel, *The Cuvier-Geoffroy Debate: French Biology in the Decades Before Darwin* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), 25–26.

³² Appel, *The Cuvier-Geoffroy Debate*, 44, 49.

³³ Madeleine Barthélemy-Madaule, *Lamarck the Mythical Precursor: A Study of the Relations between Science and Ideology*, trans. M. H. Shank (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1982), 63.

³⁴ Maurice Mandelbaum, *History, Man, & Reason: A Study in Nineteenth-Century Thought* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1971), 396 n. 4.

For a variety of scientific, institutional, and personal reasons, Cuvier's hostility to Geoffroy increased through the 1820s.³⁵ Things came to a head in their famous debate before the Académie des sciences in 1830. On one level, the debate turned on technical questions of comparative anatomy. But the fascination the debate exercised on contemporaries can be accounted for only by the much broader issues perceived to be at stake: is natural history a narrow and analytical science or a synthetic science searching for general laws applicable to all of nature? what is the appropriate balance between empiricism and theory? how do natural laws affect human freedom and divine omnipotence?³⁶ Little known beyond professional circles until his debate with Cuvier, Geoffroy's ideas on the organic unity of all species received considerable attention from that date. Novelists, poets, and philosophers were quick to deprecate Cuvier as merely a collector of narrow, static facts, and celebrate Geoffroy as the hero of an intuitive, organic, progressive vision of the cosmos and the place of humanity within it. Toby A. Appel has demonstrated Geoffroy's appeal in the 1830s and 1840s to literary and philosophical writers, including Honoré de Balzac, George Sand, and Edgar Quinet.³⁷ And just as Geoffroy was celebrated for, broadly speaking, philosophical reasons, so too Bonnet continued to be read by many of these same literary and philosophical writers for his ideas on organic unity, teleological progressivism, and the continuity of the spiritual world with the material world long after Daubenton and Cuvier's attacks had marginalized his work for natural historians. In fact, Bonnet exerted a surprisingly extensive influence on such writers in the first decades of the nineteenth century.³⁸

Ballanche's interest in the works of natural historians fits into to this pattern of philosophical, rather than scientific, interest. Leaving Bonnet aside for the moment, in the course of his works Ballanche cites the comte de Buffon and Cuvier, but not Lamarck or Geoffroy Saint-Hilaire. He mentions Buffon twice: once to criticize his views

³⁵ For a detailed account, see Appel, *The Cuvier-Geoffroy Debate*.

³⁶ Appel, *The Cuvier-Geoffroy Debate*, 172–173. Appel lists further professional, institutional, and social issues raised by the debate.

³⁷ Appel, *The Cuvier-Geoffroy Debate*, 175–201. But for a correction to her view that the pro-Geoffroy Balzac considered Cuvier no more than “a paltry fact collector”, see Henri Evans, *Louis Lambert et la philosophie de Balzac* (Paris: J. Corti, 1951), 161–164.

³⁸ See Auguste Viatte, *Les Sources occultes du romantisme*, 2 vols. (Paris: Champion, 1928), 1:41; Evans, *Louis Lambert et la philosophie de Balzac*, 152–155; Boris Réisov, *L'Historiographie romantique française, 1815–1830* (Moscou: Editions en langues étrangères, s.d. [1962]), 647–648; Marx, “L’Idée de palingénésie chez Joseph de Maistre”, 113–124.

on marriage, and both times praising his literary style.³⁹ Ballanche's references to Cuvier welcome his work on the anterior state of the earth; yet, it is clear that it is not natural history itself that interests Ballanche. Rather, Ballanche links Cuvier's work to that of other contemporary historians of origins, specifically Alexander von Humboldt, William Jones, and Friedrich and August Wilhelm Schlegel.⁴⁰ For Ballanche, all histories of origins, whether of the earth, species, languages, or humanity, are merely variations on a single master-history of origins.⁴¹ One day, he predicts, the identity of all cosmogonies will be proven.⁴² In the meantime, Cuvier's work, like that of Humboldt, Jones, and the Schlegels, lends credence analogically to Ballanche's own history of humanity.

While Cuvier himself had observed in the preface to *Recherches sur les ossements fossiles* that geological evidence for a catastrophic revolution of the earth at the beginning of human history is independently confirmed by the traditions of all early peoples,⁴³ Ballanche's confidence in the "magic wand of analogy" (Novalis) reflects the characteristic Romantic conviction that humanity and nature share a common history of development. Humanity, the microcosm, replicates in its development the history of the cosmos, the macrocosm. Some Romantics limited the analogy to the gestation of the individual; thus, Lorenz Oken and F. W. J. von Schelling asserted that individual ontogeny recapitulates the development of life on earth.⁴⁴ Other Romantics extended the analogy to the history of humanity; thus Johann Wilhelm Ritter argued that the history of the earth is the history of humanity,⁴⁵ and Johann Friedrich Blumenbach affirmed a meaningful parallel between geological periods and epochs of human history.⁴⁶

The very idea of a parallelism between the history of nature and

³⁹ OC, 2:279, 321.

⁴⁰ OC, 2:346; see also 4:169–170.

⁴¹ Ballanche, "Formule générale de l'histoire de tous les peuples: Premier fragment" in *Revue de Paris* 2 (1829): 147.

⁴² OC, 4:40.

⁴³ Charles Coulston Gillispie, *The Edge of Objectivity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1960), 260.

⁴⁴ Evelleen Richards, "'Metaphorical mystifications': the Romantic gestation of nature in British biology" in Andrew Cunningham and Nicholas Jardine, eds., *Romanticism and the Sciences* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1990), 132.

⁴⁵ Simon Schaffer, "Genius in Romantic natural philosophy" in Cunningham and Jardine, eds., *Romanticism and the Sciences*, 91.

⁴⁶ Nicholas A. Rupke, "Caves, fossils, and the history of the earth" in Cunningham and Jardine, eds., *Romanticism and the Sciences*, 249.

the history of humanity depended on the historicization of both nature and culture that was effected between, roughly, 1770 and 1810. Enlightenment anthropology and natural philosophy were both static: variations between human societies were explained by the exercise or atrophy of the rational faculty, rather than by any sort of development; and the universe was considered to be unchanged since its creation. Romantic students of culture, through works such as J. G. Herder's *Ideas on the Philosophy of the History of Mankind* (1784–1791), came to understand culture and humanity in terms of organic growth and historical change. During the same decades, the new sciences of paleontology and stratigraphy, by interpreting fossils and their emplacement in rock formations as archives of the history of life and the earth, transformed natural philosophy into natural history.⁴⁷ Once the study of both nature and culture acquired historical consciousness, it was a short, if metaphysical, step to the claim that they share the same history of development. And numerous Romantic philosophies of history took just this step. Natural historians themselves, however, and more so in France than in Germany, progressively abandoned metaphysical contemplation of nature for empiricism and positivism, and thereby renounced the project of linking natural history to other histories of origins. This struggle of natural historians to rid their discipline of metaphysics would be mirrored later in the nineteenth century in the efforts of historians to construct a non-metaphysical science of history. Such historiographical battles, however, lay in the future. The Romantic period itself was the golden age of metaphysical philosophies of history.

Ballanche's philosophy of history was itself a notable contribution to this golden age. And while his citation of Cuvier depends ultimately on the common historical consciousness acquired by the study of nature and of humanity in the Romantic period before the two disciplines went their separate ways, Ballanche's use of Cuvier is limited to analogical support. Ballanche does not draw from Cuvier anything essential to his thought. Nor, for that matter, did Ballanche draw on Geoffroy, about whom he seems to have known little before 1830. (Although the compatibility of Ballanche's thought with Geoffroy's was recognized in the 1830s, as Balzac, for one, demonstrates, both in his own *Weltanschauung* and in his novels, particularly *Louis Lambert*

⁴⁷ Several essays in *Romanticism and the Sciences* discuss the process of historicization. See especially Rupke, "Caves, fossils, and the history of the earth", 241–259.

[1833] and *Séraphita* [1835]. Slightly younger thinkers such as Pierre Leroux and Jean Reynaud further testify to this compatibility by consciously drawing on both Ballanche and Geoffroy in constructing their elaborate religio-social systems.) It is Bonnet, not Cuvier or any other natural historian, to whom Ballanche is indebted for the key developmental concept of his philosophy of history.⁴⁸ Bonnet, let us remind ourselves, was a natural philosopher, not a natural historian. The apparent paradox of a student of human history drawing on the work of a natural philosopher rather than a natural historian is resolved by noting that Ballanche is a philosopher of history; the common element to Ballanche and Bonnet is not the historicization of both the study of nature and of humanity, but the idealism that underlies both Bonnet's natural philosophy and Ballanche's philosophy of history. Ballanche, in short, values in Bonnet exactly what Cuvier despised in him. Ballanche's relationship to Cuvier and Bonnet illustrates the characteristic nature of Romantic philosophies of history as at once historical and metaphysical idealist. That is, they depict the development of humanity over time, but submit the course of its development to the direction of providence. To the extent that Ballanche's work is a philosophy of *history*, it shares Cuvier's historical consciousness; yet, as a speculative *philosophy* of history, it shares Bonnet's metaphysics. Ballanche's philosophy of history, in short, expresses its historical consciousness by means of Bonnet's concept of palingenesis. We turn now to examine how Ballanche appropriated, and modified, this scientific ideology to the service of historical explanation.

⁴⁸ The influence on Ballanche of Herder himself is slight. Though he did not read German, Ballanche knew of Herder's ideas on language and literature through intermediaries. In 1818 Bredin bought a copy of *Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit*, and promised to translate some passages for Ballanche. Bredin to Ballanche, 1 March 1818, excerpt quoted in Agnès Kettler, *Lettres de Ballanche à Madame Récamier, 1812-1845* (Paris: Champion, 1996), 75. I have been able to find only five references to Herder in Ballanche's works. OC, 1:42 and 2:414 refer to Herder's ideas on Nemesis. In 2:347 Herder is included, anonymously, among German philosophers who study the human spirit historically. In 4:167 Ballanche says that he intends to compare his ideas on the primitive traditions with those of Herder, Vico, Maistre, and Lamennais in the volumes of *Preuves* to be included in his projected nine-volume *Oeuvres*. In 5:25, finally, Ballanche remarks that Herder has developed the idea, shared by Leibnitz and Bonnet, that the history of humanity is linked to the history of the earth. In sum, what Ballanche knew of Herder confirmed his ideas rather than being a source of them.

Palingénésie sociale

Ballanche seems to have first adopted the term *palingénésie* around 1822, as attested by a remark made by Claude-Julien Bredin in response to a lost letter of Ballanche: “Il est impossible de mieux caractériser l’époque actuelle du monde que tu ne le fais par l’épithète Palingénésique”.⁴⁹ In *Prologomènes*, Ballanche recalls that he was drawn to Bonnet’s concept of palingenesis for its connotation of death and rebirth: “Il me fallait donc un nom qui, en s’appliquant à l’homme collectif, contînt à-la-fois l’idée de mort et l’idée de résurrection, ou de restitution de l’être”.⁵⁰ Already Ballanche has modified Bonnet’s concept; whereas Bonnet applied palingenesis to individuals, Ballanche applies it to societies:

Charles Bonnet a écrit un traité pour montrer comment, dès le temps même de son existence passagère, l’être mortel peut manifester en lui l’être immortel, comment l’être impérissable et incorruptible est contenu dans l’être corruptible et périssable; et, voulant que le titre seul du traité représentât tout de suite l’idée de cette glorieuse évolution, de cette grande métamorphose de l’homme, il a cru devoir nommer son livre la *Palingénésie philosophique*.

Ce que Charles Bonnet a essayé pour l’homme individuel, je l’ai tenté pour l’homme collectif (*OC*, 4:9).

The *sociale* in *Palingénésie sociale* indicates that Ballanche’s work is to be the record of the series of births, deaths, and rebirths of social orders through all the centuries of human history. The shift from individual palingenesis is no mere detail: “l’institution sociale est une institution divine; c’est par elle que l’homme se perfectionne et s’élève”.⁵¹ The social order is the arena in which humanity progressively overcomes the effects of the Fall. Each age possesses the social institutions commensurate with the stage it marks in the rehabilitation of humanity; social palingenesis is nothing other than the unfolding of the sequence of these ages.

Bonnet’s “revolutions of the globe” are fundamental to Ballanche’s social palingenesis, only they have been transformed from physical

⁴⁹ Bredin to Ballanche, 9 July 1822, in Bredin, *Correspondance philosophique et littéraire avec Ballanche*, éd. Auguste Viatte (Paris: Boccard, 1928), 177–178. In 1818, in the course of his long commentary on a draft of *Orphée*, Bredin referred to Bonnet in passing, criticizing his notion of free will but making no mention of palingenesis. Bredin, *Correspondance philosophique et littéraire avec Ballanche*, 58.

⁵⁰ *OC*, 4:13.

⁵¹ *OC*, 4:29.

catastrophes into social upheavals. Just as Bonnet's physical catastrophes introduce the unfolding of higher forms of species, so Ballanche's ages of crisis, or ages of end and renewal, introduce new phases of social evolution. In neither case do the revolutions cause evolution; just as it is a question of parallel timetables in Bonnet, so for Ballanche social revolutions providentially clear away obsolete orders so that new orders can unfold. Nevertheless, the centrality of ages of crisis to social evolution distinguishes, as Max Milner has noted,⁵² Ballanche's philosophy of history from both the linear progress of the eighteenth-century Enlightenment and the organic development of German romanticism.

In accord with Bonnet's preformationism, Ballanche argues that social evolution does not alter human nature; it simply develops a pre-existent human essence:

Ainsi le genre humain est un et identique à lui-même depuis son origine jusqu'à présent; il le sera jusqu'à la fin. Ses facultés ne sont point successives. Ce qu'il est, il l'a toujours été, il le sera toujours. . . . Ainsi le genre humain n'a pas besoin de se dégager d'une essence inférieure, pour parvenir à être ce qu'elle est: l'évolution de la race humaine est en elle-même (OC, 4:386–387).

In *Formule générale*, Ballanche speaks of human faculties successively emerging from their *sommeil embryonnaire*.⁵³ The successive emergence of human faculties constitutes not biological but social ascent. *Palin-génésie sociale* depicts the evolution of humanity from a pre-social stage of brutishness in which social institutions are utterly lacking through various stages of society, each characterized by a particular form of social order (for example, the patriciate of the early Roman Republic). Each new stage marks the accession of a greater proportion of humanity to full participation in religion and society. Progress in civilization, moreover, does not merely parallel spiritual rehabilitation; it is the process by which humanity overcomes the effects of the Fall, thereby successively realizing the full human essence. Just as Bonnet's philosophical palingenesis conflated spiritual and physiological evolution, so Ballanche's social palingenesis conflates spiritual and social evolution. Ballanche appropriates Bonnet's image of the chrysalis,⁵⁴

⁵² Max Milner, "Temps historiques et temps mythiques dans le romantisme français" in *Mélanges littéraires François Germain* (Dijon: Faculté de Lettres et Philosophie, 1979), 116.

⁵³ Ballanche, "Formule générale. Troisième Fragment" in *Revue de Paris* 6 (1829): 71.

⁵⁴ See, for example, *Palin-génésie philosophique* in *Oeuvres*, 7:193. The engraving that stands as an *en voie* to the work depicts a butterfly emerging from its chrysalis.

though with characteristic modification, as emblematic of human evolution as the unfolding of a pre-existent germ:

Le chrysalide, qui fut une chenille rampante, devient l'éclatant papillon qui se joue avec tant de grace dans le vague des airs, qui se repose à peine sur le calice embaumé des fleurs: mais cette métamorphose, emblème si prodigué par l'Auteur de la vie universelle, est tout organique; elle s'opère sans que la chenille ait besoin d'y concourir. Il n'en est point ainsi de la chrysalide humaine: il faut qu'elle se donne à elle-même les ailes brillantes sur lesquelles elle doit s'élever de région en région, jusqu'au séjour de l'immuabilité et de la gloire éternelle (*OC*, 4:138-139).

The crucial difference that Ballanche posits between the metamorphosis of the caterpillar and that of humanity reflects Ballanche's socialization of palingenesis: in the former case, the process of transformation works without the knowledge or cooperation of the caterpillar, while in the latter case humanity must effect its own transformation over the course of its social history.

For Ballanche, as for Bonnet, human destiny extends beyond a single terrestrial existence: "L'apparition de l'homme sur la terre n'est qu'une phase de son existence".⁵⁵ Terrestrial social palingenesis is only one moment in humanity's palingenetic career: "notre existence actuelle, le monde où nous sommes placés sont une fort petite partie d'un immense parabole, d'un cycle palingénésique infini. . .".⁵⁶ Indeed, at present, the human race, though lord of the earth, occupies a relatively modest position in the chain of being: "L'homme est à la tête de ce monde pour l'admirer et en jouir. D'autres intelligences existent pour admirer et jouir de l'ensemble de la création. L'homme a son rang parmi les hiérarchies sans fin. Un jour, il jouira de l'univers comme il jouit de ce monde".⁵⁷ As humanity progresses, first on earth and then through the celestial hierarchies, it undergoes progressive spiritualization. Eventually, the physical body and the entire physical world will disappear as the terrestrial phase of the rehabilitation of humanity culminates in freedom from the universe of space and time: "L'univers un jour sera dépouillé de sa force plastique: en ce jour l'oeuvre de la création sera accomplie; en ce jour l'intelligence cessera d'être soumise à l'entrave du corps, épreuve du temps".⁵⁸ As long, how-

⁵⁵ *OC*, 4:38.

⁵⁶ *OC*, 4:123.

⁵⁷ *OC*, 6:293.

⁵⁸ *OC*, 6:211.

ever, as humanity remains a terrestrial species, it remains a social species and progresses by means of the evolution of its social institutions.

The future disappearance of the physical world raises the question of the relation of humanity to the rest of the natural world. According to Ballanche, the earth immediately after its creation was uninhabitable by human beings owing to its emission of noxious gases. The spread of vegetation over the earth gradually purified the atmosphere in preparation for the appearance of animal species, beginning with the least complex and proceeding to the most complex. The animals, in turn, prepared the atmosphere for humanity by “animalizing” it, or purifying it further so as to permit the functioning of the more delicate organs of human beings.⁵⁹ Here we see in operation, as Busst notes, three basic postulates of Bonnet’s theory of palingenesis: progressive creation of species from least to most complex, correspondence between the state of the earth and species that inhabit it, and the notion that each species prepares for the one that follows it. The successive tasks of the orders of nature form a pre-historic analogue to Ballanche’s depiction in Book II of *Orphée* of the gradual taming of the earth by the first humans in preparation for the birth of the social institutions by which social evolution might commence. The first, or cosmogonic, age of humanity brings to completion the process of the domestication of the earth begun by the vegetable and animal kingdoms in the distant, pre-human past.

Despite their preparatory role, Ballanche denies animals the privilege of ascending to the status presently occupied by humanity because, in his view, evolution can operate only on intelligent and moral beings. Bonnet, who similarly denied animals morality and intelligence, argued that this lack did not preclude improvement and future life; indeed, he interpreted the principle of plenitude as demanding the palingenetic improvement of animals:

L’opinion commune qui condamne à une mort éternelle tous les êtres organisés, à l’exception de l’homme, appauvrit l’univers. Elle précipite pour toujours dans l’abîme du néant une multitude innombrable d’êtres sentans, capable d’un accroissement considérable de bonheur, et qui en repeuplant et en embellissant une nouvelle terre exalteraient les perfections adorables du Créateur.⁶⁰

⁵⁹ *VH*, 130. A. J. L. Busst discusses the sources of these ideas in his introduction, *VH*, 48–51.

⁶⁰ Bonnet, *Palingénésie philosophique* in *Oeuvres*, 7:237. Bonnet regards the existence of souls in animals as probable; *Palingénésie philosophique* is designed to show that it is

Ballanche overcomes Bonnet's unwillingness to let the ape and tiger die by positing intelligence and morality as an insurmountable barrier between humanity and all other species. Ballanche caps his insistence that animals as creatures of instinct remain unmodifiable and only humanity improves by asserting that humanity, rather than merely crowning creation, belongs to a different realm altogether: "L'homme n'est point un animal plus parfait que les autres, et plus perfectible; c'est l'homme. Il n'est pas plus élevé dans la sphère des êtres, il est hors de cette sphère".⁶¹

Though ontologically distinct, animals do, nevertheless, share the burden of evil with humanity, and as humanity overcomes this burden through social evolution they too are raised up, not in their own right, but by absorption into humanity. The foreshadowing of final reintegration in the vision of the dying Orpheus includes the transformation of nature:

Les oiseaux du ciel, les animaux de la terre, les arbres des forêts, les herbes des champs, le météores légers de l'air, tout s'animait à mes yeux de la même pensée, la pensée d'une immense régénération, d'une vaste palingénésie. Toute la chaîne de l'organisation, depuis le pierre brute jusqu'à la plus haute intelligence, était remuée à la fois, et je me sentais entraîné par cette impulsion irrésistible.⁶²

In *Prolégomènes* Ballanche suggests that the absorption of animals into humanity, by means of which he saves the continuity of the chain of being, involves the progressive domestication of all species (one thinks of Charles Fourier's crocodile-ferries) effected though "magnetic action"; in *Vision d'Hébal*, he describes it as humanity spiritualizing the rest of terrestrial creation by assimilating it to human will and intelligence.⁶³ Though neither explanation is particularly clear, it is apparent that Ballanche's lifting up the non-human world through absorption into humanity is not the same thing as Leibnitzes among the elephants.

Jacques Roos has suggested that Ballanche risked jeopardizing the continuity of the chain of being by distinguishing the human essence from the rest of nature because he was aware that a continuous chain

possible that there is a future state reserved for animals. Bonnet, *Palingénésie philosophique* in *Oeuvres*, 7:116–117. See also 7:235–236.

⁶¹ *OC*, 2:278.

⁶² *OC*, 6:212.

⁶³ *OC*, 4:329–331; *VH*, 136. On magnetism, see Chapter Eleven.

running from minerals to human beings had been one of the weapons used by Diderot and Holbach to argue for the materiality of humanity. He therefore departed from Bonnet on this point and drew instead on Jakob Boehme and Emanuel Swedenborg. Boehme establishes an irreducible difference between mortal beasts and immortal humanity: human beings retain their identity after death, while the essence of animals returns to the fluid mass of primitive life and survives only in an obscure anonymity; the essence of imperishable life that cannot be reduced to non-being in animals is absorbed into humanity. Swedenborg, for whom the lower kingdoms of nature realize their potentialities through humanity, heir to what is immaterial and immortal in nature, confirms that nature is redeemed through humanity.⁶⁴ The Boehme-Swedenborg theory is clearly discernable in Ballanche's account:

Les animaux ne sont point destinés à s'élever jusqu'à l'homme; mais, s'il il est permit d'employer une telle expression, ils sont destinés à être absorbés par lui. Ils sont sans individualité, sans spontanéité, et néanmoins le principe immatériel qui est en eux ne peut être anéanti. Y aurait-il une loi cosmogonique perpétuelle, en vertu de laquelle l'être qui est au sommet d'une hiérarchie d'organisation rappellerait sans cesse à lui, se rendre propre, par une attraction continue, le principe immatériel de toute sphère où il domine? (*OC*, 4:330).

Elsewhere, Ballanche extends humanity's absorptive powers to "l'âme végétive des plants".⁶⁵ Ballanche, it seems to me, unquestionably drew on Boehme and Swedenborg in reestablishing the traditional hierarchical relation between humanity and the rest of creation (for both Saint Paul [Rom. 8:19–22] and Alexandrian Hermeticism nature is regenerated through humanity)⁶⁶ overturned by Bonnet. However, while fear of materialist rationalism may have been a factor in Ballanche's anthropocentrism, it is to be fundamentally explained as a corollary of his shift from natural to social palingenesis. Because evolution works through social institutions, only consciously social species evolve, and for Ballanche this means the human race alone

⁶⁴ Jacques Roos, *Aspects littéraires du mysticisme philosophique et l'influence de Boehme et de Swedenborg au début de romantisme: William Blake, Novalis, Ballanche* (Strasbourg: Heitz, 1951), 390–391. My thanks to Jane Williams-Hogan for bringing this aspect of Swedenborg's thought to my attention.

⁶⁵ *OC*, 6:162.

⁶⁶ Antoine Faivre, "Ancient and Medieval Sources of Modern Esoteric Movements" in Faivre and Jacob Needleman, eds. *Modern Esoteric Spirituality* (New York: Crossroad, 1992), 6.

of terrestrial species. We see here the importance of “social” to “evolution” in Ballanche’s thought.

Another important, and related, point by which Ballanche’s system may be distinguished from Bonnet’s is the intimate relation Ballanche posits between palingenesis and expiation. Bonnet has no place for the idea that the price of evolution is suffering; his cosmos is not a place of punishment or purgation, nor does it receive its value only in relation to another world. Bonnet assumes that all creation is good and that this world and the evolution of its creatures requires no further or external justification. Ballanche, in contrast, emphasizes the fallenness of the world and assumes that it is a place of expiatory suffering. He even extends the process of expiation beyond this existence: “Ceci ne serait-il point une image et une prophétie d’un autre ordre d’épreuves réservé au genre humain dans un autre ordre d’existence? N’est-ce point l’emblème d’une hiérarchie toujours progressive jusqu’à l’entière consommation des plans éternels?”⁶⁷

Its expiatory dimension makes Ballanche’s social palingenesis also a theodicy. Human suffering, a consequence of the Fall, is the means by which the Fall is overcome. Humanity cannot accuse God of permitting needless suffering because humanity brought suffering on itself and because it is by means of the expiatory value of suffering that humanity is rehabilitated. Joseph de Maistre, who in *Considérations sur la France* (1796) similarly links evolution to suffering, criticizes Bonnet for not giving sufficient weight to the Fall.⁶⁸ Yet, while Bonnet declined to discuss original sin in *Palingénésie philosophique*, contenting himself with referring the reader to Part One of Leibnitz’s *Theodicy*, the theodical dimension of *Palingénésie philosophique* makes it plain that he did not ignore suffering. Nevertheless, Ballanche and Bonnet differ significantly on the place of suffering in the divine economy. Bonnet subsumes suffering into the larger question of theodicy; he is concerned to show that such suffering as exists in this best of all possible worlds is necessary suffering. Bonnet does not deny or trivialize suffering, but he subordinates it to the palingenetic process. Ballanche, in contrast, not only affirms that any suffering permitted by God is necessary, but also, by upgrading suffering into expiation, makes it a condition of the very operation of evolution. Whereas theodicy is an auxiliary

⁶⁷ OC, 4:62.

⁶⁸ Joseph de Maistre, *Oeuvres complètes*, 14 vols. (Lyon: 1884–1886), 1:40. Maistre reiterates his criticism of Bonnet in the “Neuvième Entretien” of *Soirées de Saint-Petersbourg* (1821).

element of *Palingénésie philosophique*, it is at the very heart of *Palingénésie sociale*.

Ballanche's social palingenesis modifies Bonnet's philosophical palingenesis in three important ways. 1) From the Enlightenment-Liberal version of progress as the amelioration of humanity through the rational improvement of society, and encouraged by his reading of Giambattista Vico, Ballanche introduces the notion that the subject of serial palingenesis is social institutions. 2) In part in reaction against Enlightenment materialist readings of the chain of being, Ballanche sharply distinguishes the human essence from the rest of nature. 3) From his own meditations on suffering, Ballanche insists that palingenesis operates by means of expiation. Nevertheless, the filiation of Ballanche's social palingenesis to Bonnet's philosophical palingenesis is apparent from the several fundamental features of the latter retained in the former: the term palingenesis itself, in its double sense of rebirth and regeneration; the idea of preformationism: the human essence is always the same, it merely unfolds over time; evolution as the term for preformationist development; the cardinal importance of crises; the conflation of evolution with the spiritual rehabilitation of humanity; and theodical concern.

Gaston Frainnet, and, following him, Brian Juden, have declared that Ballanche was not an evolutionist.⁶⁹ This is true only to the extent that he did not share the Darwinian view of humanity as the product of non-human ancestry. Ballanche was unquestionably an evolutionist in Bonnet's sense of locating humanity in the midst of the unfolding of a divinely pre-programmed ascent toward spiritual perfection. Whenever the term evolution appears in *Palingénésie sociale* it must be understood as a synonym for palingenesis. If Bonnet's philosophical palingenesis constitutes a scientific ideology, Ballanche's social palingenesis may be described as a historical ideology; that is, an explanatory system applied to human history but derived, via Bonnet, from theology. As such, Ballanche's social palingenesis is representative, and illuminates the intellectual matrix, of two epochal occurrences in Western historiographical reflection: it demonstrates the link between the characteristic historical sense of early nineteenth-century European thinkers and a theological or teleological world view that made the early nineteenth century the golden age of speculative

⁶⁹ Gaston Frainnet, *Essai sur la philosophie de P.-S. Ballanche* (Paris: Picard, 1903), 216; Brian Juden, *Traditions orphiques et tendances mystiques* (Paris: Klincksieck, 1971), 274.

philosophies of history; and it belongs to, indeed helped effect, the contemporaneous shift from mechanistic theories of progress of the eighteenth century to the social organicism of nineteenth-century theories of progress.

Ballanche's theory of social palingenesis corresponds to his middle way between Liberals and Ultras in his social and political treatises of 1818–1820. It effects genuine progress while subordinating progress to providence by interpreting it as the visible face of spiritual rehabilitation. Moreover, the theory of social palingenesis marks an advance in relating progress to expiation because, inasmuch as rehabilitation represents the overcoming of the effects of the Fall through suffering, it posits expiation as the motor of progress.

CHAPTER TEN

SOCIAL EVOLUTION

Though Ballanche gathered his last set of works under the panoramic title of *Essais de Palingénésie sociale*, in the course of these works Ballanche more commonly refers to the sequence of social palingenese, as it is worked out in history, as social evolution. In this chapter, I examine the two conceptual models by which Ballanche expresses the palingenetic sequence: the three ages of humanity and the struggle of the principle of progress (embodied by the West) against the principle of stasis (embodied by the Orient). I also consider the relation of Ballanche's thought to Giambattista Vico.

The three ages of humanity

Ballanche divides human history into three ages: the cosmogonic age, the epic age, and the historical age, corresponding, respectively, to the Titanic, the patrician, and the plebeian phases of social evolution. The struggles of the Titans, or proto-humans, against the elements and wild beasts prepared the earth for the future development of humanity. Titans were not of a different race than human beings; rather, they were an early stage in the development of humanity: "Dans le mythe grec, la race humaine succède aux Titans, lesquels ont préparé la demeure de l'homme. Mais le Titan est l'homme cosmogonique, l'homme qui lutte contre les éléments".¹ The inhabitants of the Titanic age, that is, were biologically human; what they lacked were the social institutions constitutive of true humanity, in the absence of which they lived as clannish hordes, outside the rule of law and obeying only the force of brute strength. The brutish inhabitants of the Titanic age were humans in germ; that is, humans at the very beginning of social evolution. Human history, properly speaking, dawned when the earth had been sufficiently tamed through the cosmogonic labours of the Titans so as to permit the practice of

¹ OC, 5:126.

agriculture and consequently the establishment of other civilizing social institutions. These innovations mark the end of the Titanic age and the beginning of the patrician age.

In the patrician age struggle among human beings replaced struggle against nature. Indeed, the distinguishing feature of the patrician age is its rigid division between patricians and plebeians. Ballanche uses these terms derived from Roman history as generic labels to designate a class division that he believes to have been universal in antiquity among the nations of the West. Patricians were the sole owners of property and alone had a legal and religious identity. Plebeians were considered as dependents of their patrons, with no independent rights or even identity. Plebeians struggle against their subjection, and their struggle culminates in the conquest by the plebeians of admission to full religious and civil rights. With this conquest the patrician age gives way to the plebeian age. Social evolution, which may also be expressed as plebeian evolution, or the progressive triumph of plebeianism, is the successive inclusion of an ever increasing proportion of the human race in full participation in religion and society. Though the passage through the three ages is not one of biological ascent, social evolution is nevertheless a process of humanization because for Ballanche social and religious responsibility is the condition of full humanity.

Ballanche observes that the succession of Titanic, patrician, and plebeian ages has been prefigured in the traditional sequence of celestial dynasties in Greek and Roman myth: "Les cosmogonies générales nous montrent des changements de dieux pour les âges critiques du monde; les cosmogonies secondaires nous montrent des changements de dynasties pour les âges critiques des différents peuples".² Just as Saturn, the god of the Titans, was overthrown by Jupiter, the god of the patricians, so, in human societies, the age of the patricians succeeded the age of the Titans. In turn, Bacchus, the god of the plebeians, dethroned Jupiter, just as in the civil world the plebeians correspondingly overthrew the patricians.³

Within *Palingénésie sociale*, the brutishness of Samothrace and Thrace prior to Orpheus' arrival represents the cosmogonic or Titanic age,

² OC, 6:230.

³ OC, 5:153–154. Brian Juden discusses the Alexandrian source of this myth of divine successions, which he nicely calls a *palingénésique orphique*, in "Particularités du mythe d'Orphée chez Ballanche" in *Cahiers de l'Association internationale des Études françaises* 22 (1970): 140.

Thebes and the early Roman Republic represent the epic or patrician age, while the history of the Struggle of the Orders at Rome represents the transition to the historical or plebeian age. *Elégie* and *Ville des Expiations* depict the contemporary period as the culmination of the plebeian age. Ballanche, let us note, is unusual among the creators of the various nineteenth-century versions of tripartite historiography in that he emphasizes the transitions between the ages, rather than the characters of the ages themselves. Henri de Lubac has attempted to enrol Ballanche among the heirs of Joachim of Fiori, but it is difficult to see any direct influence. Lubac himself is forced to conclude that Ballanche's "joachimisme" was hesitant, imprecise, and moderated by his belief in the impossibility of retrogression.⁴ Ballanche stresses that the transition from one age to another is always difficult and full of suffering for those who must live through it: "L'éducation du genre humain est toujours dure, parcequ'elle contient toujours la double condition de l'expiation et du progrès acheté par l'effort, même par la douleur".⁵ The notion of the suffering of ages of crisis is picked up from Ballanche's 1818–1820 works, yet suffering is now firmly linked to progress because traumatic ages of crisis, as the civil equivalent of Bonnet's physical catastrophes, are essential for the unfolding of social evolution.

Books III and IV of *Orphée* show Orpheus guiding the still brutish Samothracians and Thracians onto the path of social evolution. On his arrival in Samothrace, then Thrace, Orpheus finds the inhabitants sunk in the cosmogonic age of struggle against nature. Their brutishness is not an innate or aboriginal savagery; it is rather a degeneration resulting from a series of catastrophes that destroyed primitive institutions and reduced entire peoples to brutishness. Though the Samothracians and Thracians now have no religion, law, marriage, or tombs, their pre-catastrophic ancestors possessed all these institutions.⁶ In their brutish state, these proto-humans are hunters and gatherers; when they are hungry, they seek food, and having devoured their catch, they sleep. Such a life is incapable of developing their intelligence. By teaching them the sowing and harvesting of wheat and other agricultural techniques, Orpheus teaches them foresight and patience, the foundations on which all society is based: "Ainsi le

⁴ Henri de Lubac, *La Posterité spirituelle de Joachim de Flore*, 2 vols. (Paris: Lethielleux, 1979, 1981), 1:322.

⁵ *OC*, 4:267.

⁶ *OC*, 5:188–189.

premier moyen de civiliser les hommes est de leur enseigner à semer le blé. Ils sont alors obligés de prévoir et d'attendre. Toute la société est dans ces rudiments grossiers".⁷ Agriculture is the starting point of the path to civilization because from it arise the other civilizing institutions of religion, property, marriage, the family, and funerary rites.⁸ Agriculture is so important to social evolution that uncivilized peoples, that is, those who stand outside social evolution, are called "amazons", which Ballanche defines as "those deprived of bread".⁹ This is the sum of Ballanche's account of the link between agriculture and the origin of the civilizing institutions. What is important for Ballanche's philosophy of history is the establishment of social institutions at the beginning of the civilizing process. Indeed, since he considers all legal rights to have originated from the division of land, Ballanche speaks of the laws governing the fundamental aspects of society, such as personal status, marriage, and property, as agrarian laws.¹⁰ While Giambattista Vico is an obvious source for the association of social institutions with agrarian laws, though it should be noted that here agriculture is transmitted by Orpheus rather than invented by early humans, as in the *New Science*,¹¹ one should not ignore the allegorical interpretations of agriculture put forward in the works of two writers well known to Ballanche, Antoine Court de Gébelin and Fabre d'Olivet.

The French Protestant Court de Gébelin (1725–1784), in his monumental *Le Monde primitif analysé et comparé avec le monde moderne* (1773–1782), interpreted all ancient myths as allegories of agricultural practices: the myth of Saturn symbolizes the invention of agriculture, that of Mercury the calendar or almanac, while the Twelve Labours of Hercules signify either the history of the spread of agriculture throughout the ancient world or the agricultural tasks for the twelve months of the year. Even what appear to be the most extravagant of superstitions, Court de Gébelin assured his readers, are seen to figure, when interpreted correctly, rational agronomy.¹² Fabre d'Olivet, for

⁷ OC, 5:249.

⁸ OC, 5:212, 249–250.

⁹ OC, 6:253. See also 6:249.

¹⁰ See OC, 4:220.

¹¹ Vico, *The New Science of Giambattista Vico*, trans. Thomas Bergin and Max Harold Fisch (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1988), §§ 107, 597.

¹² Court de Gébelin, *Le Monde primitif analysé et comparé avec le monde moderne*, 9 vols. (Paris: 1773–1782), 8:xxxi, xxxv. See also Frank Manuel, *The Eighteenth Century Confronts the Gods* (New York: Athenaeum, 1967), 256.

his part, gathered around himself in 1824 a group of disciples whom he organized into a sect, *Théodoxie universelle*, whose ritual and theology he himself, as supreme Pontiff, provided. Fabre cast his new cult in the form of a masonic lodge except that, drawing from a variety of sources, including Court de Gébelin, he replaced the traditional masonic and architectural symbolism and paraphernalia with substitutes derived from agriculture. The human soul, he taught, is a seed that requires cultivation to blossom. Fabre outlined the teachings of his sect in a work titled *La Vrai Maçonnerie et la Céleste Culture*.¹³ It is uncertain if Ballanche was familiar with *Théodoxie universelle*; Fabre's book remained unpublished until edited by Léon Cellier in 1953 (Grenoble: PUF), and Ballanche himself was in Italy with Juliette Récamier for the few months that the sect endured before Fabre's death in March 1825. Nevertheless, Ballanche knew Fabre personally and had been deeply involved with Fabre's thought in the months before he left for Italy through his review of Fabre's *Cain, mystère dramatique de lord Byron* (see Chapter Eleven). Ballanche's theory combines Court de Gébelin's primitive Physiocrats and Fabre d'Olivet's purely symbolic agrosophs inasmuch as it posits both literal agriculture and spiritual progress.

Under Orpheus' tutelage the Samothracians and Thracians progress rapidly. Since they are not truly savage, only degenerate, it is not a matter of teaching them something new but merely of bringing out what is already within them.¹⁴ In this notion of social progress as the unfolding of what is already within we recognize Ballanche's adaptation of Bonnet's preformationism, as well as, perhaps, a distant echo of the platonic doctrine of reminiscence. Further, Ballanche believes that the human heart, when not obstructed by passions or prejudices, recognizes truth instantly. Since these denizens of the Titanic age are simple people, they respond immediately. Here Ballanche seems to add Rousseau's notion of the instant recognition of virtue when unmediated by the corrupting influence of civilization to his amalgam of Bonnet's preformationist evolutionism and Plato's epistemology (although for Ballanche, of course, passions and prejudices are fundamentally anti-social, rather than, as for Rousseau, the by-products of society itself).

¹³ Léon Cellier, *Fabre d'Olivet. Contribution à l'Etude des Aspects religieux du romantisme* (Paris: Nizet, 1953), 312–321.

¹⁴ *OC*, 5:211–213.

Greece represents a more advanced stage of social evolution than Samothrace and Thrace. *Orphée* depicts Greek societies as already divided into patricians and plebeians. The patrician age began when groups of plebeians sought asylum, or protection, under the roofs of patricians. The act of granting asylum carried with it no extension of rights; in fact, it bound plebeians in perpetual submission to patricians. Patricians possess land, family, a name, civil speech, free will, religion, marriage, a tomb, the capacity of good and evil, and the right to hold office. Plebeians possess none of these; religion, marriage, burial are forbidden them and they have no independent religious, familial, or legal existence. They maintain a civil identity only through clientage; that is, they exist solely as reflections of their patrons. Plebeians are excluded forever from patrician mysteries, and the taking of auguries is forbidden them. Plebeians are not even fully human; instead of persons, they are mortals. Ballanche cites Thebes as a model of heroic age society; it is divided into two cities: an inner, or mystical, city, whose secret name is Ogyges, and an outer, or profane, city, Thebes proper. The Ops, or patricians, inhabit the former; the Inopes, or plebeians, the latter. The distinction between the two cities and their respective inhabitants is mystical: both patricians and plebeians, that is, occupy the same space; they are distinguished not by essence but by knowledge, which is to say, degree of initiation. The patricians are those who possess moral responsibility, and whose religion has comprehended the identical mysteries of property and marriage.¹⁵

Sibyls play an important role in the early history of social evolution in *Orphée*. A sibyl, for Ballanche, is a woman in whom a powerful passive receptivity to the providential design for her age makes her an embodiment of that particular stage of social evolution and bestows on her oracular powers.¹⁶ Structurally, sibyls correspond to the Hebrew prophets: each transmits God's will to humanity in specific historical situations. In *Ville des Expiations* Ballanche cites Nicolas-Antoine Boulanger and Vico in his definition of sibyls as personifications of social ages.¹⁷ In Book III of *Orphée* the Sibyl of Samothrace,

¹⁵ *OC*, 5:301–302.

¹⁶ The Fonds Récamier at the Bibliothèque Nationale contains Ballanche's outline of a projected work on sibyls. BN, n.a.f. 14094. See Agnès Kettler, *Lettres de Ballanche à Madame Récamier, 1812–1845* (Paris: Champion, 1996), 272–281.

¹⁷ *VE*, 131. Boulanger discusses sibyls in *L'Antiquité dévoilée par ses usages* (1766), Bk. 3, chpt. 3; Vico in *The New Science* (1744), §§ 381 and 464. Both Boulanger and Vico cite Virgil (*Aeneid*, Bk. 6 and *Eclogue to Pollio*).

the embodiment of the Titanic age, acknowledges to Orpheus that the Titanic age, and herself with it, is expiring, but warns that the transition to the new age will be painful. In Book IV another sibyl, the sibyl of the new age, heralds the arrival of Orpheus in Thrace by informing the brutish Thracians that the Titanic age is over and that Orpheus is about to land on their shores to make them into human beings. Ballanche identifies the sibyl of the new age as Völuspa. In Nordic myth, as Ballanche may have learned from Fabre d'Olivet,¹⁸ Völuspa was the name of the text of a prophecy in the *Edda*; the sibyl who gave the prophecy was Völva. Ballanche knows this (*OC*, 5:29), but follows Fabre in applying to the sibyl the name Völuspa, which Fabre defined as "she who sees the universality of things".¹⁹ The Roman sibyl of Book IX reprises the role of the Samothracian sibyl: she embodies the dying patrician age and serves notice that the transition to the plebeian age will be long and painful. Her song sums up in advance the history of the world between the end of the Titanic age and the beginning of the plebeian age. As such, it is a summa of the law of the patrician age that picks up the sketch of patrician Thebes.

Patrician law, which Ballanche calls the *loi-mos*, posits an unbridgeable gulf between patricians and plebeians based on the principle of an ontological difference between patrician and plebeian souls. Patricians have absolute authority over their clients. Indeed, the chief function of the plebeians is to contribute, through being sacrificed, to the pomp of their patrons' funerals.²⁰ The ontological distinction between patricians and plebeians is mirrored in the division of Rome into a sacred *cit  * (Valentia)²¹ and a profane *ville*, a division which itself reflects the mystical and the profane Thebes and is reproduced in the esoteric and exoteric Villes des Expiations. *Formule g  n  rale* opens with the Roman Senate affirming that the patrician law summarized by the Sibyl is the ancient, immutable tradition of Rome. The Senators uphold the ontological distinction between patricians and plebeians:

¹⁸ Antoine Fabre d'Olivet, "Discourse sur l'essence et la forme de la po  sie" in *Les Vers dor  s de Pythagore* (Paris: L'Age de l'homme, 1978 [1813]), 157.

¹⁹ Fabre d'Olivet, *Histoire philosophique du genre humain* (Paris: 1824; reprinted Paris: L'Age d'homme, 1974), 1:155. This is also the source of the episode of V  luspa stopping a battle with religious instruction.

²⁰ *OC*, 6:240–253. See also 5:72–74.

²¹ Valentia is the sacred name of Rome in Fabre d'Olivet, *Histoire philosophique du genre humain*, 2:23. According to Fabre, Valentia was the Etruscan name of the future site of Rome.

plebeians are not, legally or religiously, human persons, only mortals. They anathematize all attempts to ameliorate the lot of the plebeians, insisting that patrician law merely recognizes a fundamental and divinely established distinction that they, even with the best will in the world, are powerless to overcome:

Ce que Mutius Valérius, ce que Posthumius, ce que Servilius demandent est contraire à l'essence des choses. Il ne dépend pas de nous que les plébéiens soient des hommes, quand ils ne sont que des mortels. . . . Reconnaissez donc, à un tel signe, qu'une barrière est posée par la nature et par la religion.²²

The Senators condemn any attempt to breach the patrician law as *promiscuité*. This term pertains to the inviolability of patrician privilege: any transfer to the plebeians of patrician rights and secrets, any attempt to bridge the gulf between patrician and plebeian is both sacrilegious and illegal because it undermines the order of things of the heroic age. Any challenge, then, to the immutable patrician order qualifies as promiscuity. The three secessions that make up the Struggle of the Orders at Rome are precisely three challenges to the concept of promiscuity.

Ballanche's version of the story of the first secession begins with the overthrow of the tyrant Tarquin by the combined strength of the patricians and plebeians. Rather than reward the plebeians for their assistance, however, the patricians capitalize on the elimination of the King by redoubling the severity of patrician law. They reinforce the ontological difference between patricians and plebeians and suppress the plebeians' nascent self-awareness. One day, the plebeians rebel against their oppressors: they believe that their assistance against Tarquin entitles them to civil status and personhood. They rush out of the city and set up camp on Mount Aventine. Eventually the patricians are forced to acknowledge that they need the plebeians and agree to a treaty with the secessionists. According to the terms of the treaty, the plebeians receive a guarantee of their new legal status in the establishment of the tribunate, an office to which two plebeians are to be elected each year. The tribunes are to be considered sacrosanct in their persons and are to be initiated into the use of the patrician word *veto*; that is, they will have the power to render

²² Ballanche, "Formule générale. Deuxième fragment. Année 259 de Rome" in *Revue de Paris* 4 (1829): 139–140.

null any decision of the Senate. However, because they owe their existence to the plebeians' action and not to sacred law, nothing else of the patrician mysteries will be transmitted to them, nor will they be permitted to take auguries or to enter the sacred precinct of the Senate. Ballanche explicitly declares that it was the suffering endured by the plebeians that merited them accession into civil status.

Ballanche sums up the achievement of the first secession in these words:

La première sécession plébéienne se résume donc par ce seul fait. Jusqu'alors, le client avait été identique avec le patron; il vient de s'en détacher pour vivre de sa vie propre, pour commencer une destinée personnelle, pour avoir la conscience de lui-même, enfin pour produire une volonté individuelle. Le client continuera d'être soumis au patron, mais il en sera distinct, comme l'enfant nouveau-né est distinct de sa mère.²³

Prior to the first secession the plebeians had been only proto-human. Brutish, they were human only in potential; now, having acquired a sense of themselves as distinct and responsible beings, they have entered human history. Here we may see clearly illustrated Ballanche's doctrine that the palingeneses of each nation reproduce the cosmogonic history of the human race itself. The separation of the plebeians from the patriciate and their acquisition of responsibility reproduces the creation of humanity from the divine unity and its acquisition of the capacity of good and evil. In terms of social evolution at Rome, the plebeians re-activate and institutionalize in the tribunate the principle of progress that had been lost in the immobility of patrician law. Henceforth, the Struggle of the Orders that comprises the history of Rome will be the struggle of the progressive principle against the principle of stasis. As such, Roman history becomes the archetypical history of all ancient societies; hence, Ballanche's claim that the history of Rome exemplifies the "formule générale de l'histoire de tous les peuples".

Ballanche's second secession begins with the usurpation of power by the Decemvirs, who undo the gains of the first secession by suspending the tribunate and resubjecting plebeians to their patrician patrons. One young *plébéienne*, Virginia, rebels against the reimposed patrician law; moreover, she also, promiscuously, desires to worship

²³ Ballanche, "Formule générale. Troisième fragment" in *Revue de Paris* 6 (1829): 98.

the gods in her own right and to have a marriage hallowed by religion and recognized by law. For these heinous crimes against patrician law Virginia is put to death. Outraged by her death, the plebeians again secede, this time to Mount Crustumerian. Once again, the patricians are forced to come to terms with the plebeians. A new agreement spells out the new rights that the plebeians have acquired through their, and particularly Virginia's, suffering:

Dès aujourd'hui les plébéiens ont acquis le sentiment de la pudicité. . . . L'impunité est abolie dans les murs sacrés de Rome; l'isonomie commence à y régner. . . . le peuple romain se compose de deux ordres. Les plébéiens n'étant plus étrangers à la cité, leur magistrature [the tribunate] sera consacrée par le collège des pontifes. . . . En ce moment même les plébéiens ont le *connubium*. . . .²⁴

The plebeians, that is, have won the right of marriage and acceded to the official status of personhood; they are now legally and religiously Romans. Yet, as a body the plebeians remain inferior to the patricians in rights because they are still excluded from holding certain civil and religious offices. The continuing distinction between patricians and plebeians is legally embodied in the division of Rome into two orders. Nevertheless, the plebeians have made major gains with the abolition of impunity and the establishment of the principle of isonomy.²⁵ The abolition of impunity signifies that patrician inviolability under patrician law has now been terminated in the consecration of the tribunate. Isonomy, or legal equality, represents the overcoming of the fundamental principle of patrician law: the ontological distinction between patricians and plebeians. Let us note, however, that Ballanche's phrase is "isonomy begins to reign at Rome". Only the principle of isonomy has been won; the acquisition of full isonomy, and thus the completion of the transition to the plebeian age, will be the mission of the third secession.

Only fragments of the third secession exist; Haac has summed up what can be inferred about it in his introduction.²⁶ Threatened with an attempt by the Senate to abrogate the plebeians' hard won rights,

²⁴ Ballanche, *La Théodicée et la Virginie romaine*, éd. Oscar A. Haac (Genève: Droz, 1959), 134–135.

²⁵ As a Latin word *isonomia* is rare, appearing only as a direct transliteration from the Greek. Ballanche took the term from Herodotus and Thucydides, who used it to refer to the political and legal equality of all citizens of a Greek city-state, and applied it to Roman history as the goal of plebeian evolution.

²⁶ Ballanche, *La Théodicée et la Virginie romaine*, éd. Haac, 68.

particularly legitimate marriage,²⁷ the tribunes organize a third secession, this time to Mount Janiculum. Once again the patricians are forced to yield, conceding to the plebeians full rights of citizenship and access to the cultus. Through their admission to all offices full isonomy at last reigns at Rome, and the evolution from the patrician to the plebeian age is complete.

Society evolves, but religion does not. Indeed, Ballanche maintains that religion cannot progress because it is nothing other than divine thought and as such religion, like God himself, is immutable. Nevertheless, divine thought became successive in order to manifest itself to humanity. The progressive expression of divine thought is the history of society itself. Though a "formule générale" of religion cannot be written because divine thought cannot be constrained in spatio-temporal terms, its progressive manifestation in time and space may be charted. The social evolution of *Palingénésie sociale* is nothing other than the "formule générale" of the progressive unfolding of divine thought incarnated in the social order. Ballanche here applies Bonnet's preformationist evolutionism to history. This is why Ballanche unblushingly describes *Palingénésie sociale* as the ruling idea of his age. Pure, or non-incarnated, divine thought, he adds, will become comprehensible to human beings only when humanity has completed its rehabilitation; when, that is, the divine thought itself has been fully realized and humanity has evolved beyond the spatio-temporal universe to reclaim its place in the celestial hierarchies.²⁸

Ville des Expiations introduces a historical schema of four ages of the world.²⁹ This four-fold sequence of ages appears nowhere else in Ballanche's works (except briefly in passing in the introductory narrative to *Vision d'Hébal*). Moreover, is it incompatible with the sequence of three ages that underlies the rest of *Palingénésie sociale* because it omits the period between the Flood and the advent of Christianity, thereby implying that rehabilitation commences only with the historical manifestation of Christ, and that all rehabilitation takes place under the auspices of Christianity. Such a reading of history renders *Orphée* and *Formule générale* meaningless, and undermines Ballanche's beloved notion of an anterior Christianity (see Chapter Thirteen). Clearly, there is a basic contradiction between the three ages of

²⁷ See also *VE*, 174.

²⁸ *OC*, 4:362-364.

²⁹ *VE*, 113.

humanity of the rest of *Palingénésie sociale*, and even of most of *Ville des Expiations*, and this belated four ages theory. A similar contradiction appears near the end of *Vision d'Hébal* when Hébal witnesses the Last Judgement. Now, as A. J. L. Busst remarks in his commentary, the very idea of a Last Judgement is diametrically opposed to a fundamental principle of Ballanche's thought: that the unity of the human race demands the rehabilitation of all in the reintegration of the Universal Adam. Busst concludes that Ballanche added the Last Judgement scene as a compromise with orthodoxy. The fact that the scene is poorly integrated textually confirms its anomalous status within the intellectual structure of *Palingénésie sociale*.³⁰ If the Last Judgement in *Vision d'Hébal* is a poorly digested sop to the orthodox, it is probable that the attribution of all salvation to historical Christianity of the four ages theory in *Ville des Expiations* fulfils the same function. I am unable to provide a source for this intrusive model of history. Obviously, it resembles the classical Greek theory of the gold, silver, bronze, and iron ages, though inverted. Fabre d'Olivet similarly inverts the Greek sequence in *Histoire philosophique du genre humain*, though Fabre's purpose is to refute the idea of a golden age rather than to provide an account of four ages of the world. Ballanche certainly agreed with the rejection of the notion of a golden age, though he cites Vico rather than Fabre d'Olivet in his discussion.³¹ In any case, Fabre would hardly have been his source for a theory designed to demonstrate his own orthodoxy.

The struggle of the two principles

The three ages of humanity express the working out in history of the fundamental binary process, introduced in *Institutions sociales*, in which the principle of progress struggles against the principle of stasis. Ballanche alternatively conceived of this struggle as the successive emancipation of the West from the Orient.³²

The constant struggle between patricians and plebeians in the West ensures that it remains progressive and that the rehabilitation of the

³⁰ Busst, *VH*, 236–237, n. 210. See also Paul Bénichou, *Le Temps des prophètes* (Paris: Gallimard, 1977), 101.

³¹ *OC*, 4:264.

³² By Orient Ballanche usually means India, though sometimes China and the Islamic world as well.

human race continues. In the Orient, however, the struggle has ceased, with dire consequences: "Partout où la lutte cesse, il y a stagnation, civilisation pétrifiée ou stéréotypée comme en Orient".³³ The Orient was not always static; indeed, social evolution began in India when the establishment of castes founded social inequality. Castes represent a primitive division of *épreuves* according to the variety of human faculties (cf. the division of *épreuves* in *L'Homme sans nom*). By this means the basic division of society into initiators and initiateables became operative in history. In recognition of its cosmogonic role in founding the social evolutionary process Ballanche designates the Orient as "le berceau cosmogonique du genre humain".³⁴ Yet, something went awry; the evolutionary process derailed in the Orient:

Dans les royaumes de l'Inde, rien ne commence, rien ne finit, rien n'est. La naissance, la vie, la mort, sont des apparences également indifférentes. L'espèce humaine n'existe point, car elle est silencieuse, passivement contemplative, sans volonté. Tout est absorbé dans l'être universel, dans l'être absolu, et l'esprit de l'homme n'est qu'une goutte d'eau perdue au sein d'un abyme immense et sans bornes (*OC*, 6:171).

Ballanche conjectures that the basically religious caste distinctions were introduced into the civil world too early and without sufficient preparation. He does not elaborate on this hypothesis, but the end result is that the principle of inequality became petrified as the caste system, intended to be merely a transitional stage, became permanent.³⁵ Indian patricians, not understanding the progressive nature of society, refused the duty of rulers to march at the head of progress and oppressed their peoples. Consequently, the Orient has become a by-word for initiators who attempt to keep their initiateables in permanent subjection. Prior to its petrification, however, the Orient transmitted to Egypt the principle of social distinction based on capacity for *épreuve*. Egypt transformed caste distinctions into initiatory grades, and, in turn, transmitted the initiatory schema to the emerging nations of the West,³⁶ among whom it functioned properly, as in the archetypical social evolution via class struggle of the Roman plebeians depicted in *Formule générale*. For this reason, and in honour of its cosmogonic

³³ *OC*, 4:392.

³⁴ *OC*, 4:252.

³⁵ *OC*, 4:341–342. In *OC*, 6:176, Ballanche argues that social evolution in the Orient was subverted by a false conception of initiation (see Chapter Eleven).

³⁶ *OC*, 4:341–342.

status, Ballanche refers to older societies that initiate younger ones through the transmission of wisdom (Thrace for Greece, Etruria for Italy) as local Orients.³⁷ Similarly, he generally defines the patricians and plebeians of any age as, respectively, the Orient and the West.³⁸

Orphée presents the “merveilleuse terre”³⁹ of Egypt as a country unlike any other in the ancient world. Its inhabitants were an old, established people, far removed from Samothracian brutishness. Egypt, in fact, is an image of the universe in which all social forms, representing the successive degrees of human initiation, co-exist harmoniously, whereas in other nations the long and painful overcoming of class divisions will be accomplished only when the Christian law of religious equality is fully extended into the civil realm.⁴⁰ Egypt, however, is only an image of civil harmony because, being ahistorical, it is impotent to actualize it. In the absence of class struggle, social evolution cannot operate; in fact, Egypt stands outside the slow birth of the civil world as a fixed symbol of the eternal laws governing humanity. The vast silence that reigns over Egyptian cities symbolizes the stasis of “ce royaume de l’immobilité”.⁴¹ The notion of Egyptian immobility recalls both J. J. Winkelmann’s influential critique of Egyptian art in his *Geschichte der Kunst des Altertums* (1764) as stiff and inelegant owing to a dependence on fixed rules⁴² and Ballanche’s own characterization of the Orient as the principle of stasis. Nevertheless, though Egypt to some extent recreates the Orient on the Nile, it functions as the crucial link between the Orient and the West because it preserves the cosmogonic traditions while overseeing social evolution by transmitting the traditions to the Western nations at the appropriate times. Egypt, then, is the threshold between the Orient and the West, between stasis and progress.⁴³ In this respect, Ballanche rings his social evolutionary variation on the Romantic revalorization of Egypt as “not the cradle of civilization, language and religion, but the place of an eclectic synthesis between Orient and Occident”.⁴⁴

³⁷ *VE*, 30.

³⁸ *OC*, 4:70.

³⁹ *OC*, 5:102.

⁴⁰ *OC*, 4:227–228.

⁴¹ *OC*, 6:19.

⁴² See Eric Iversen, *The Myth of Egypt and its Hieroglyphs in European Tradition* (Copenhagen: Gec Gad, 1961; reprint Princeton: Princeton UP, 1993), 114.

⁴³ *OC*, 4:107.

⁴⁴ Frank Paul Bowman, “Illuminism, utopia, mythology” in D. G. Charlton, ed., *The French Romantics*, 2 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1984), 1:88.

Egypt, however, is not only the threshold between the Orient and the West, it represents both. The silence of Egyptian cities is an image of the stasis of India, while the initiations performed by its priests herald, indeed engender, the progressivism of the West. Egypt shares the double nature of many of Ballanche's initiators. It is in respect to the first term of its double nature that Ballanche describes Egypt as a weakened image of India.⁴⁵ This remark has been made much of by those who enrol Ballanche among the Indic enthusiasts of the Romantic movement. It is apparent, however, that Egypt is a weakened image of India because it admits, indeed first awakens, the principle of progress: "Chez nous commence le règne de la parole et du mouvement; chez nous l'homme est un être qui a de la réalité, qui commande, qui obéit, qui se détermine, qui résiste, qui se soumet, dont les pensées naissent et se développent, enfin qui use de ses facultés".⁴⁶ Ballanche values Egypt precisely for its double nature; it preserves the image of the cosmogonic cradle of humanity while initiating the West into the process of rehabilitation that had stagnated in India itself. "L'Egypte ne représente pas l'Orient, mais le remplace."⁴⁷

The transmission to the West of the Oriental dogmas on which religious and social inequality, and thus the operation of social evolution, is based—symbolized by ahistorical Egypt—is effected historically by the family of peoples Ballanche calls Pelasgians: "Les Pélasges ont marqué la première transition de l'Orient à l'Occident".⁴⁸ Ballanche traces the migrations of these peoples from the region around the Caspian Sea across Thrace and Macedonia into Italy.⁴⁹ Everywhere they went they carried the Oriental dogmas that founded the patrician societies of the West. Once Orpheus had formed the Samothracians into a people united by social and religious bonds through the transmission of the truths of primitive revelation, thereby establishing the patrician age in Samothrace, he declared that henceforth they are Pelasgians.⁵⁰ As heirs of the Orient, Pelasgians become initiator-peoples to the initiatables of the West.

Ballanche's interpretation of the history of Greece is based on a distinction between Pelasgians and Hellenes. He identifies Dorians,

⁴⁵ *OC*, 6:170.

⁴⁶ *OC*, 6:171.

⁴⁷ *OC*, 6:7.

⁴⁸ *VH*, 156.

⁴⁹ *OC*, 5:51–52.

⁵⁰ *OC*, 191.

including Spartans, as Pelasgians and Ionians, including Athenians, as Hellenes. The “brillante fantaisie” of the Hellenes perverted “le dogme sévère des Pélasges”, issued from the pure oriental tradition.⁵¹ The Peloponnesian War exemplifies the struggle in Greece between the Oriental stasis of the Pelasgians and the plebeian progressivism of the Hellenes. The severely patrician Spartans, the embodiment of the order of things of the patrician age, tried to freeze social evolution, thereby becoming the static Orient of the Peloponnese. The Athenian democracy, which had substituted individual imagination and will for the traditions of the patrician age, exaggerated the emancipation of humanity, prematurely attempting to complete the transition to the plebeian age by disengaging the individual from the traditions. Though the Peloponnesian War was thus a struggle between the two principles embodied by Sparta and Athens, it did not further social evolution. In fact, Greek civilization proved to be a dead-end from the perspective of plebeian evolution because the Greeks never resolved their struggle in a progressive synthesis. The Athenians refused to submit to the initiating principle they themselves lacked, while the Spartans refused to exercise their initiatory function and fell into perpetual stasis. Instead of resolving the conflict, the Peloponnesian War destroyed both Athens and Sparta and temporarily terminated social evolution in the Greek city-states.⁵² Having forfeited social evolution, Greece soon declined, passing under the rule of Macedonia, then Rome. Despite its failure, Ballanche does not regard the history of classical Greece as a meaningless episode in the history of humanity. The Athenian democrats, “so stupid in many ways”, defeated Persia at Salamis, thereby ensuring the victory of the West and progress. Even Sparta, at Thermopylae, contributed to the struggle against Persian stasis.⁵³

Ballanche depicts the Roman patrician order, expressed in the *loi-*

⁵¹ *VH*, 156.

⁵² *VH*, 156–160, and n. 66; see also *OC*, 5:53. Ballanche’s adoption of Fabre d’Olivet’s cosmogonic principles of Will and Destiny in his discussion of the Peloponnesian War, by which Athens embodied Will and Sparta Destiny, complicates his rather simply theory of the stagnation of social evolution. Fabre’s Will and Destiny are not exact equivalents of Ballanche’s progressive and static principles. Will for Ballanche can ally itself with either progress or stasis, thereby helping or hindering social evolution. Further, for Fabre, a third principle, Providence, must reconcile Will and Destiny, whereas for Ballanche, Providence guides the gradual triumph of progress over stasis in social evolution.

⁵³ *VH*, 159–162.

mos, as having been founded on the "pythagorean" dogmas transmitted to Rome from the Orient via the Pelasgian peoples who migrated to Italy.⁵⁴ This filiation is symbolized by the arrival of Aeneas and his remnant fleeing fallen Troy. Ballanche identifies Troy as a vassal of Assyria,⁵⁵ and the bulwark of Asia in Europe. As such, it fell under the same condemnation as the rest of the Orient. Correspondingly, he reads the Trojan War as an early episode in the struggle to emancipate Europe from Oriental stasis.⁵⁶ In accord, however, with the palingenetic principle, symbolized by the phoenix, by which dying societies contain within themselves the germ of the new social order,⁵⁷ the Trojan Aeneas, "dépositaire des traditions de l'Orient" who arrives in Italy carrying his father on his shoulders,⁵⁸ brings the Oriental principle of stasis to the founding of Rome. The opening passages of *Orphée* depict Thamyris arriving in Latium in order to transmit to King Evander the sacred name of *Romula*; near the end of Book IX, at the same time as he informs Evander that his line will end with arrival of Aeneas, he does so. The name *Romula* expresses the providential purpose of the future people who will build a great city on the site of Evander's camp. Its mission will be to effect the transition from the patrician to the plebeian age by means of the proper functioning of the struggle between the two principles: "Romula est le nom que nous donnons à la raison d'être de ce peuple futur; et ce peuple hâtera l'évolution des destinées de l'Occident".⁵⁹ The entire intervening tale of Orpheus as an agent of social evolution may be read as a gloss on the meaning of *Romula* as the operation of social evolution. Ballanche's variation on Virgil's theme of the greatness of Rome arising from the blending of two peoples in the marriage of Aeneas and Lavinia depicts the glorious history of Rome as issuing from the establishment at its founding of the principle of stasis and the principle of progress, of initiators and initiatables.

In *Vision d'Hébal* Ballanche sketches some ideas that allow us to see how the progressive mission of Rome, the subject of *Formule générale*,

⁵⁴ See A. J. L. Busst, "The Message of Ballanche's *Orphée*" in *Romance Studies* 10 (1987): 25.

⁵⁵ On the authority of Plato, *Laws*, III.

⁵⁶ *OC*, 5:90. See also 5:37, 53, 94.

⁵⁷ On the allegorical significance of the phoenix, the *oiseau palingénésique*, see *OC*, 6:73-81.

⁵⁸ Ballanche, *La Théodicée et la Virginie romaine*, 101.

⁵⁹ *OC*, 6:232.

came to an end with the transition from republic to empire. Ballanche interprets the absolute power of the emperor as the end product of the long evolution of the tribunate, born in the first plebeian secession. The emperor therefore personifies plebeianism, yet because the emperor wields absolute power plebeianism is no longer subject to initiation by the patrician depositaries of the general traditions. The outright triumph of plebeianism breaks the binary structure of initiation, thereby causing social evolution to cease at Rome.⁶⁰ A curious episode from *Vision d'Hébal*, whose probable sources are given by Busst, depicts the victory of Rome, now described as the universal despot, over Caledonia, the last outpost of liberty. The point of the episode seems to be to show that liberty has now apparently disappeared entirely from the world. Hébal, however, does not despair because he knows that Christianity bears within itself the germ of liberty: "La liberté politique, un jour, naîtra de la liberté qu'enfante le régénération".⁶¹ Here, though Ballanche does not mark it as such, we have reached a watershed in history. In the pre-Christian world, social evolution operated through the progressive initiation of plebeians by patricians. It was based, that is, on the division of humanity into initiateables and initiators. The Christian law of religious equality, however, abolishes all distinctions. Social evolution is henceforth the progressive spread of the law of religious equality into the civil sphere.

The completion of the rehabilitation of humanity through plebeian evolution requires that the Orient itself become progressive. It is the mission of the contemporary West to pull the Orient out of its stagnation and restart the social evolution derailed so long ago.⁶² Ballanche's choice of the word *mission* is deliberate. Since social evolution is the means of rehabilitating the human race, the reclamation of the Orient for progress is a religious duty: "Si l'Orient vient à entrer dans le mouvement progressif, les destinées humaines marcheront vers leur dernier accomplissement".⁶³ Ballanche is sure that "le christianisme remplacera l'Orient".⁶⁴ Yet, while Ballanche was unquestionably an intellectual imperialist, he was not a conventional apologist for missionary activity since his Christianity corresponds not to any sect, but to plebeian evolution. That Christianity will *replace* rather

⁶⁰ *VH*, 176. See also *OC*, 5:8–9.

⁶¹ *VH*, 194.

⁶² *OC*, 4:392.

⁶³ *OC*, 4:256.

⁶⁴ *OC*, 4:257.

than convert the Orient shows that for Ballanche Christianity and the Orient are ideas; the idea of Christianity is social evolution, the idea of the Orient is stasis. Christianity replacing the Orient means that the principle of movement and emancipation will replace the principle of stasis. Ballanche's two models of social evolution (the sequence of three ages and the successive emancipation of the West from the Orient) coincide in the triumph of Christianity over the Orient. Christianity, as the principle of equality, represents the end of social evolution in the culmination of the plebeian age, and the mission of the plebeian age will not be fulfilled until the principle of social equality has been extended to all the peoples of the world.⁶⁵

Ballanche and Vico

Ballanche claimed Vico as a kindred spirit and intellectual precursor whose brilliant intuitions he himself draws out fully in his own writings: "[Vico] est venu un siècle trop tôt pour présider à la révolution qui s'accomplit en ce moment dans la science historique".⁶⁶ Ballanche's contemporaries (and many later commentators), noting similarities in the work of the two thinkers, speculated on the exact relation of Ballanche's ideas to those of Vico. Friendly critics aligned them in a common tradition,⁶⁷ hostile ones accused Ballanche of outright plagiarism of the *New Science*.⁶⁸ Ballanche reacted angrily to the suggestion

⁶⁵ The young Jules Michelet presented in his *Introduction à l'histoire universelle* (1831) a remarkably similar conception of human history as a spiritual journey from fatalist Asia to progressive Europe. See Patrick Hutton, "Vico's Theory of History and the French Revolutionary Tradition" in *Journal of the History of Ideas* 37 (1976): 247. Cf. also the Saint-Simonians' interest in Asia.

⁶⁶ *OC*, 4:194–195. This section is drawn from Arthur McCalla, "Pierre-Simon Ballanche as Reader of Vico" in *New Vico Studies* 9 (1991): 43–59.

⁶⁷ "M. Ballanche appartient, dans ses développemens, à l'école de Vico..." Adolphe Mazure, "Ballanche" in *La France littéraire* 9 (1834): 8.

"... ce émule de Vico et Herder, qui envient pour nous l'Allemagne et l'Italie." Louis de Loménie, "M. Ballanche" in *Galérie des Contemporains illustrés*, 10 vols. (Paris: René, 1840–1847), 2:3.

"Le souffle de Vico repose sur Ballanche." Jules Michelet, *Histoire romaine* (1831) in *Oeuvres complètes*, éd. Paul Viallaneix, 21 vols. (Paris: Flammarion, 1971–1982), 2:340 n. 3.

"En effet, il y a accord complet entre les principes de Vico et de Ballanche, sauf quelques réserves de style". Joseph Buche, *L'École mystique de Lyon* (Paris: Alcan, 1935), 188.

⁶⁸ "M. Ballanche a puisé abondamment dans la *Science nouvelle*. Le système de Vico, son ingéneuse philologie, ses divinations souvent si heureuse sur l'antiquité,

that he had derived his philosophy of history from Vico, insisting that he had known nothing of the Neapolitan's works until 1824, by which time his own ideas were largely set, and that Vico merely confirmed several of the conclusions he had already reached by his own instincts. He further suggests that it was the affinity of Vico's ideas with his own that allowed him easy access to Vico.⁶⁹

Opportunity had existed for Ballanche to discover Vico before 1824. Two Neapolitan émigrés, Vincenzo Cuoco and Francisco Salfi, promoted Vico's ideas in France in the first decades of the nineteenth century.⁷⁰ Ballanche seems to have been unaware of their work. This is not the case, however, regarding two other French works influenced by Vico. In Chapter X of *Considérations sur la France* Joseph de Maistre cites Vico in a note to his discussion of the role of the nobility in the State.⁷¹ And A. J. L. Busst has demonstrated Ballanche's familiarity with an anonymous work on Roman history, *Considérations sur l'origine et les révolutions du gouvernement des Romains* (Paris: 1778). The author was the abbé Louis-Clair Le Beau du Bignon, whom Busst qualifies as the only eighteenth-century Frenchman whose work reflects a thorough knowledge of the *New Science* (itself derived from Emmanuele Duni).⁷² Bignon's book aroused Ballanche's interest in Vico's ideas on Roman history.⁷³ One must, however, be cautious in asserting that the presence of Vichian ideas in these books proves that Ballanche was familiar with Vico prior to his trip to Italy. Neither Maistre nor Bignon advertised the extent to which he had been influenced by

sur Rome, et le droit romaine, lui ont servi d'enseignement et de base." Eugène Lerminier, "Philosophie de l'histoire. *Oeuvres de M. Ballanche*" in *Le Globe* (3 July 1830): 549.

⁶⁹ This is the gist of the two letters Ballanche wrote to *Le Globe* protesting its treatment of him. "Lettre à l'Auteur de l'article du *Globe*" and "Lettre à Monsieur le Rédacteur du *Globe*", BML MSS 1806–1810, Dossier 17. As early as 1827 Ballanche had publicly stated, vis-à-vis the ideas on Roman history that he intended to present in *Formule générale*, that the works of various eighteenth-century Italian jurists, above all Vico, had simply confirmed ideas which he had already worked out on his own. *OC*, 4:164.

⁷⁰ Giambattista Vico, *Autobiography of Giambattista Vico*, trans. Max Harold Fisch and Thomas Bergin (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1944), 64–65. Salfi was instrumental in Michelet's discovery, within month's of Ballanche's, of Vico.

⁷¹ On Maistre and Vico see Elio Gianturco, *Joseph de Maistre and Giambattista Vico: Italian Roots of De Maistre's Political Culture* (New York: Columbia UP, 1937).

⁷² A. J. L. Busst, "From Vico to Ballanche—via the abbé Du Bignon" in *Transactions of the Eighth International Congress on the Enlightenment*, 3 vols. (Oxford: Voltaire Foundation, 1992), 1:331.

⁷³ See the note reproduced in A. J. L. Busst, "Ballanche et Fossati: une collaboration mystérieuse" in *Rivista di Letterature Moderne e Comparata* 19 (1966): 285.

Vico, so Ballanche may not have known much about the details of Vico's theories or even that he was the ultimate source of the ideas found in their works. Ballanche's excitement in 1824 over Vico certainly suggests that he truly is discovering his works for the first time; and it is inconceivable that he would have sought to mislead Récamier and Bredin over such a matter. It seems to me probable that Ballanche was familiar with some of Vico's ideas before 1824 but that he had not derived them from Vico and did not know their source. This explanation also accounts for the sense of affinity with which Ballanche responded to Vico in 1824.

While Ballanche's basic ideas were indeed set by 1824, he did borrow extensively from the presentation of Roman history in the *New Science* for *Orphée* and, above all, *Formule générale*,⁷⁴ thereby giving some semblance of substance to the accusations of his critics. The controversy over plagiarism, however, obscures a deeper assumption. Both sides, Ballanche and his detractors, agreed that Ballanche's ideas were fundamentally in accord with those of the *New Science*. This assumption is open to question. In the following pages I shall test it by comparing Ballanche's philosophy of history with the Vichian ideas of the ideal eternal history and the *ricorsi*, as well with the mechanism to which Vico attributes the development of humanity.

In the *New Science* (1744), Vico describes a sequence of three ages, or the ideal eternal history, through which all Gentile nations have passed in the course of their development:

- (1) The age of the gods, in which the gentiles believed that they lived under divine governments, and everything was commanded them by auspices and oracles, which are the oldest institutions in profane history.
- (2) The age of the heroes, in which they reigned everywhere in aristocratic commonwealths, on account of a certain superiority of nature which they held themselves to have over the plebs.
- (3) The age of men, in which all men recognized themselves as equal in human nature, and therefore there were established first the popular commonwealths and then the monarchies, both of which are forms of human government.⁷⁵

Ballanche superimposed Vico's ideal eternal history onto his own tripartite model in the belief that the two sequences of ages were the

⁷⁴ For details see Busst, "From Vico to Ballanche—via the abbé Du Bignon", 331–332, and Ballanche, *La Théodicée et la Virginie romaine*, éd. Haac, 23–33.

⁷⁵ Vico, *The New Science of Giambattista Vico*, trans. Thomas Bergin and Max Harold Fisch (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1988), § 31. Vico excludes the Hebrews from his historical schema on the grounds that providence has taken a direct hand in their history.

same. Thus he sometimes refers to his three ages by Vico's terms of divine, heroic, and human. Actually, he often designates the latter two ages by Vico's names, but the former only rarely. This divergence signals a difference in content between the two first ages. There is also a second, more fundamental, difference between the two schemata: the mechanism of progression from age to age. I shall discuss each difference in turn.

For Vico, the Flood placed an absolute barrier between ante- and post-diluvial times. Human history began anew after the Flood, and while the Hebrews remained in direct contact with God through revelation, Gentile peoples were cut off from direct divine guidance. Vico describes the isolated denizens of his divine age as "stupid, insensate, horrible beasts", whose gods were the fantastic products of fear and their own imaginations.⁷⁶ Yet these *bestioni*, the feral ancestors of the Gentile nations, differed in one crucial respect from the other beasts who wandered the primeval forests: they possessed imagination, a faculty capable of initiating development. The other beasts, lacking this faculty and thus this capacity, were condemned to remain beasts forever. The imagination of the first peoples was so powerful, in fact, that it constituted their fundamental nature. Moreover, it is owing to this imaginative, or "poetic", nature that Vico designates the first age of humanity the "divine" age. According to Vico:

The first nature, by a powerful deceit of imagination, which is most robust in the weakest at reasoning, was a poetic or creative nature which we may be allowed to call divine, as it ascribed to physical things the being of substances animated by gods. . . . Furthermore it was a nature all fierce and cruel; but, through that same error of their imagination, men had a terrible fear of the gods whom they themselves had created.⁷⁷

That the nature of the first peoples was "poetic", or imaginative, was thus the consequence of their incapacity for rational thought. When, for example, they were confronted with the terrifying phenomena of thunder and lightning, whose true cause they did not know, the people of the first age imagined them to be the decrees of beings analogous to themselves but hugely superior in strength whom they must placate and obey.⁷⁸ In this manner, "poetic metaphysics"

⁷⁶ Vico, *New Science*, §§ 374 and 916.

⁷⁷ Vico, *New Science*, § 916.

⁷⁸ Vico, *New Science*, §§ 374–378.

(*metafisica poetica*), or the religion of the divine age, was born. Religion, marriage, and burial rites, the institutions through which the beasts became human, arose from attempts to placate the imagined anger of imagined gods. Vico's adjective "divine" must be interpreted ironically as "erroneously imagined to be divine".

The inhabitants of Ballanche's cosmogonic age (the Samothracians before Orpheus' arrival, for example), unlike Vico's *bestioni*, were brutish, but not brutes. That is, they were not beasts on their way to becoming human, but humans who had degenerated to a savage existence. This distinction suggests that the cosmogonic age was not an absolute recommencement of human history, as the divine age had been for Vico. In fact, Ballanche declares that an anterior civilization had once existed in Samothrace but had been destroyed by a series of physical catastrophes (floods, earthquakes). The confusion and horror resulting from these catastrophes gave birth both to the savage conditions of the first humans following the catastrophes and to the tales of primitive misery to be found in Greek mythology.⁷⁹ Ballanche's early Samothracians are in some respects reminiscent of the first post-diluvian generation depicted by Nicolas-Antoine Boulanger in his widely read *Antiquité dévoilée par ses usages* (1766). Boulanger's post-diluvians were not brutes, in the manner of Vico's *bestioni*; they were the survivors of a sophisticated society whose capacity for rational thought had been destroyed by the horrors of the great Flood. Their terrified imaginations conjured up a despotic god, to whose anger the Flood was attributed and who requires constant propitiation. All ancient religions have their origin in this primeval trauma, whence the dominant religious emotion was a lugubrious sadness, and ancient religion nothing more than an endless, dismal, apprehensive reenactment of the catastrophe.⁸⁰ Ballanche's Samothracians have not lost their rationality, but, as in Boulanger, their savage state is attributed to the catastrophe of the Flood. Ballanche knew Boulanger's work well, and refers to his ideas on primitive religion from time to time.⁸¹ Though Boulanger was anathema to most Christians of Ballanche's day, both for his views on primitive religion and for his close association with the notorious atheist baron d'Holbach, Ballanche was sympathetic toward him and argued that

⁷⁹ OC, 4:263.

⁸⁰ Manuel, *The Eighteenth Century Confronts the Gods*, 217.

⁸¹ Cf. OC, 4:165–166, 268–270, 273; 5:20.

he had been misunderstood by the orthodox.⁸² I suspect, however, that Ballanche's sympathy for Boulanger owed less to any genuinely shared beliefs about primitive religion than to Ballanche's affinity for the sense of universal suffering that pervades Boulanger's antiquity.

Returning to Ballanche's post-diluvians, *Orphée* does not explain whether the catastrophes caused the end of the anterior civilization, as in Boulanger, or if they simply marked its end. Ballanche faced a structural difficulty here. The narrator of *Orphée* is Thamyris, who recounts the history of Orpheus to King Evander of Latium. Thamyris can tell Evander only what he himself has learned and he must speak within the intellectual framework of his time and place. *Orphée*, however, must be placed within a wider context than that encompassed by classical myth because Ballanche collapses the distinction made in the *New Science* between sacred history and secular history. For Ballanche, the history of the Gentile nations is as much the history of God's people as that of the Hebrews.⁸³ Both traditions, moreover, received their full significance only with the advent of Christianity, which Orpheus foresaw as surely as any Hebrew prophet.⁸⁴ Ballanche's *Orphée*, paralleling the Pentateuch, describes the first steps in humanity's long struggle to overcome the effects of the Fall. Behind the events narrated in *Orphée*, as behind those of the Pentateuch, lies the primeval catastrophe of the Fall. Thamyris, however, knowing nothing of Biblical revelation and lacking complete initiation into the general traditions of humanity, is unaware of the spiritual drama that had culminated in the Fall and that in turn had caused the physical catastrophes known to him. Though Thamyris could not so inform Evander, we may understand that the catastrophes in *Orphée* that marked the beginning of the cosmogonic age of humanity were caused by the Fall. We may further infer that the age anterior to the catastrophes was a pre-lapsarian age in which humanity lived in direct contact and perfect harmony with God. Whereas the savagery of Vico's *bestioni* was a natural state, the brutishness of Ballanche's Samothracians represents humanity fallen from its aboriginal bliss.

Vico's and Ballanche's first ages differ fundamentally, then, in that Vico's divine age represents the beginnings of humanity in pre-human

⁸² *OC*, 4:166. Ballanche likely had in mind Lamennais' condemnation of Boulanger in the third volume of *Essai sur l'indifférence en matière de religion* (1823).

⁸³ *OC*, 4:109–110.

⁸⁴ *OC*, 6:213–214.

beasts whereas Ballanche's cosmogonic age represents the beginning of history as first steps in the rehabilitation of a fallen race, whose true beginnings must be sought in an age anterior still, a pre-lapsarian age that might be described as divine without Vichian irony. The content of *Palingénésie sociale* is the history of humanity's quest to overcome the consequences of the Fall. This history is played out in the cosmogonic, heroic, and human ages. The pre-lapsarian divine age, which brackets this history as its point of departure and ultimate goal, does not properly belong to the subject matter of *Palingénésie sociale*. Nevertheless, the history of the three ages of humanity is meaningless without reference to it (prehistory explains history).

The other famous Vichean historiographical idea, besides the ideal eternal history, is the notion of *ricorsi*, or repetition of the cycle of ages. A. J. L. Busst identifies a succession of palingenetic cycles in Ballanche's thought, noting that he, like Vico, speaks of the Middle Ages as a return to the divine age.⁸⁵ Ballanche, again like Vico, says very little about the second palingenetic cycle. The point of division between the two cycles is the advent of Christianity, yet while Christianity does represent an important shift from evolution by class distinction to evolution by the spread of religious equality, it is still part of the unfolding of the plebeian age. In other words, the palingenetic cycle within Christianity corresponds, for example, to the palingenetic cycle within the Struggle of the Orders at Rome. Both are epicycles of the greater cycle; the plebeian secessions are part of the transition from the patrician to the plebeian age, and the transformations of Christianity belong to the slow fulfilment of the plebeian age. Thus, though the notion of *ricorsi* is discernible in *Palingénésie sociale*, and though Ballanche can say, for example, that each race and each nation has its own cosmogonic age,⁸⁶ Ballanche's palingenetic cycles differ from Vico's *ricorsi* because instead of endlessly and independently repeating the same sequence they are sub-divisions of a single, continuous progression.⁸⁷ Human history is in fact a single palingenetic sequence from the dawn of the cosmogonic age of the distant past to the future culmination of the plebeian age.

Another important difference between Ballanche's and Vico's

⁸⁵ *VH*, 26–27, 139.

⁸⁶ *VH*, 149.

⁸⁷ See Boris Réisov, *L'Historiographie romantique française, 1815–1830* (Moscou: Editions en langues étrangères, s.d. [1962]), 668.

schemata is the manner in which humanity develops. For Vico, the wisdom of the first age corresponds to the brutish nature of the first peoples. It was not, then, the rational and abstract philosophy of today; rather, ancient wisdom, like ancient religion, consisted of poetic fantasies born of ignorance and conceived through the conjunction of the objects of the external world and imaginations untrammelled by reason.⁸⁸ Vico harboured a special contempt for scholars who read a lofty esoteric wisdom into these irrational fantasies:

To this conceit of the nations [that each believes itself to have invented civilization] is added that of the scholars, who will have it that what they know is as old as the world.

This axiom disposes of all the opinions of the scholars concerning the matchless wisdom of the ancients. . . . It further condemns as impertinent all the mystic meanings with which the Egyptian hieroglyphics are endowed by the scholars, and the philosophical allegories which they have read into the Greek fables.⁸⁹

In the course of the *New Science*, Vico refutes numerous instances of this “scholarly conceit” of “the matchless wisdom of the ancients”.⁹⁰ A prime example is his treatment of Orpheus. Scorning “philosophical allegories” that depict Orpheus as a transmitter of the wisdom of the ancients, the *New Science* shows Orpheus to have been a “poetic character” (*carattere poetico*). That is, Orpheus was not a historical individual but a collective creation of a people to whom was retroactively attributed actions and laws constitutive of civilization that had in reality been effected by the people itself. As such, Orpheus signifies the establishment of humanity through the introduction of civilizing laws and institutions. Orpheus’ lyre, in turn, symbolizes the mythopoeic force of the fear induced by thunder and lightning that was required to establish religion and the other civilizing institutions and tame the *bestioni*.⁹¹

According to Ballanche, in the primitive traditions of humanity the wisdom of the pre-lapsarian age survived the Fall and its accompanying catastrophes, and its transmission via sages effected the transition from the cosmogonic to the heroic age. Ballanche consciously opposes his version of primitive history to the isolation and abasement

⁸⁸ Vico, *New Science*, § 375.

⁸⁹ Vico, *New Science*, §§ 127–128.

⁹⁰ Vico, *New Science*, inter alia §§ 223, 384, 435.

⁹¹ Vico, *New Science*, §§ 414, 523, 615, 721.

of Vico's *bestioni*: "La grande erreur de Vico est de partir de la dispersion et de l'abrutissement. Erreur analogique à ceux qui ont posé pour fait primitif social, le prétendu état de la nature; et pour fait primitif religieux, le fétichisme".⁹² Ballanche's notion of the primitive traditions of humanity strongly suggests the attitude toward antiquity condemned by Vico as the scholarly conceit of the matchless wisdom of the ancients. Though Ballanche never uses this exact phrase, his veneration of primitive wisdom leaves no doubt that he "read mystic meanings into Egyptian hieroglyphics and philosophical allegories into Greek fables". Ballanche himself sums up his opposition to Vico on this point in an apposite image: "la lyre d'Orphée sera pour moi ce que fut la foudre pour Vico".⁹³ That is, the development of civilization effected by fearful imaginations in the *New Science* is accomplished in the *Orphée* through the transmission of ancient wisdom.

The customary explanation for any disparity between Vico's use of a concept and Ballanche's appropriation of it maintains that Ballanche modified what he took from the *New Science* in accordance with his already established ideas.⁹⁴ I do not wish to deny that Ballanche's readings prior to his late discovery of Vico in some way conditioned his response to Vico's thought, but I would like to suggest an alternative solution, one which explains why Ballanche continued to admire Vico and to borrow from the *New Science* despite the immense distortion he inflicted on his appropriations. Ballanche, I believe, read the *New Science* according to the principles of an earlier work of Vico himself, *On the Most Ancient Wisdom of the Italians*.

Vico wrote *On the Most Ancient Wisdom* in 1710, fifteen years before the first edition of the *New Science* and almost twenty-five years before its third and final version of 1744. The treatise represents Vico's first articulation of an anti-Cartesian epistemology based on his famous *verum/factum* principle. It also promulgates a theory of primitive history, and it is this second aspect of the work which concerns us here.

⁹² BML, MSS 1806–1810, Dossier 22, "Extraits et analyses de divers auteurs anciens", cahier XII (Ballanche's annotation to notes on the *New Science*). This criticism of Vico reappears in *OC*, 4:166–167 and again in 4:378. Ballanche's allusions to a state of nature and to fetishism refer, respectively, to Rousseau's *Du contrat social* (1762) and Charles de Brosses' *Dissertation sur les dieux fétiches* (1757).

⁹³ *OC*, 4:380. On the significance of the lyre in Ballanche's thought generally, see A. J. L. Busst, "Ballanche et le poète voyant" in *Romantisme* 4 (1972): 93–96.

⁹⁴ For example, Haac in *La Théodicée et la Virginie romaine*, 32–33. Haac stresses the importance in this respect of the early influence on Ballanche of Fabre d'Olivet and Joseph de Maistre.

On The Most Ancient Wisdom opens with Vico's observation that certain Latin words, owing to their philosophical aspect, do not conform to the usage of the early Romans, whose technical vocabulary was limited to terms pertaining to farming and war. Vico conjectures that this unexpectedly learned aspect of Latin may be explained by the borrowings, above all religious and philosophical, made by the early Romans from their older and more advanced neighbours, particularly the Ionians and the Etruscans. Vico further posits that by studying the etymologies of these anomalous words it is possible to discover the content of the philosophical teachings of these ancient Italian peoples.⁹⁵ Hence the full title of his treatise: *On the Most Ancient Wisdom of the Italians, Unearthed from the Origins of the Latin Language*.

Ballanche published the complete Latin text of *De antiquissima Italorum sapientia* in the preface to the limited 1829 edition of *Orphée*.⁹⁶ He hoped thereby to bolster awareness of Vico in France because he believed that Vico's works remained relevant for the French situation. A knowledge of Vico, he argues, would have prevented the excesses of the French Revolution by mitigating the destructive spirit of eighteenth-century rationalism and can now help to overcome the divisive effects of the Revolution on French society by moderating extremist views. Ballanche notes wistfully that his own *Institutions sociales* would have received a better reception had Vico been more widely known.⁹⁷ Nevertheless, concern for Vico's reputation was not his sole motivation in reprinting *On the Most Ancient Wisdom*; Ballanche believed that it complemented his own *Orphée*, and that together *Orphée* and *On the Most Ancient Wisdom* provide the necessary background for the third volume of *Palingénésie sociale, Formule générale*.⁹⁸ The complementarity of the two works rests on the fact that, although Vico himself worked backwards from the Latin language to ancient Italian wisdom, his treatise can be read as an account of the development of civilization

⁹⁵ Giambattista Vico, *On the Most Ancient Wisdom of the Italians*, trans. L. M. Palmer (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1988), 37–39. Subsequent page references are to Palmer's translation.

⁹⁶ Vico's text was omitted from the edition of the *Orphée* published in the *Oeuvres* (see note in *OC*, 4:386). Ballanche's was the first ever republication of the original Latin text, as Palmer acknowledges in the "Preface" to her translation of *On the Most Ancient Wisdom*, x (where she calls him Pierre-Simone and cites the *Orphée* as volume 12, rather than 2, of the *Palingénésie sociale*). Ballanche always referred to the work as *De antiqua* (rather than *antiquissima*) *Italorum sapientia*.

⁹⁷ See *OC*, 4:381–382.

⁹⁸ *OC*, 5:65.

through the transmission from one people to another of religious and philosophical teachings.

Vico elaborates on this account of the development of civilization in his "Second Response" to the *Giornale de' letterati d'Italia*, a Venetian journal in which appeared two articles critical of *On the Most Ancient Wisdom*.⁹⁹ Here Vico argues that not only Romans but also Ionian Greeks and the great Pythagoras learned from the Etruscans. Moreover, he now insists that the Etruscans themselves derived their wisdom from the Egyptians, "the most ancient philosophers of the pagan world". Finally, as Vico traces the descent of wisdom from Egypt through Etruria to Magna Graeca and Rome, he stresses the central role played in this transmission by "the powerful realm of the Etruscans in Italy and the diffusion of languages in the wake of political power".¹⁰⁰ Palmer notes that the Egyptian hypothesis developed in the "Second Response" contradicts Vico's earlier arguments in which he mentioned only Ionians and Etruscans. She concludes that "[o]nly sheer cussedness could have led Vico to develop the Egyptian hypothesis after he read the [*Giornale*] article".¹⁰¹ What is important here, however, is that Ballanche undoubtedly knew the "Second Response".¹⁰²

Orphée presents Egypt as the guardian of the general traditions of humanity and initiatrix of the Western world. This notion, coupled with the idea of Etruria as the source of much of Roman civilization, also appears in the *Prolégomènes*: "Pour faire sentir l'importance des traditions étrusques, relativement à la chose romaine, il suffit de se rappeler quelles furent leur puissance et leur durée. . . . Sans doute l'Etrurie religieuse fut à la péninsule italique ce que fut l'Egypte pour le monde de la gentilité."¹⁰³ While his adoption of the notion of Egypt as the initiatrix of the gentile world undoubtedly predates his discovery of Vico,¹⁰⁴ Ballanche's association of Egypt with Etruria and his

⁹⁹ The articles appeared in Vol. 5 (1711): 119–130 and Vol. 8 (1711): 309–338. Translations of the articles and Vico's responses are included in Palmer's edition of *On The Most Ancient Wisdom*.

¹⁰⁰ Vico, *On the Most Ancient Wisdom*, 153–158.

¹⁰¹ Vico, *On the Most Ancient Wisdom*, 155 n. 14.

¹⁰² Ballanche alludes to the two "Responses" in *OC*, 4:202.

¹⁰³ *OC*, 4:180. We recall that in March 1825—after his summer in Naples—Ballanche made a research trip to Tuscany.

¹⁰⁴ Ballanche's single most important source for the idea of Egypt as *initiatrice mundi* was probably Fabre d'Olivet. See Cellier, *Fabre d'Olivet*, 342. Egypt had been accorded this role in the draft of the *Orphée* read by Bredin in 1818. See Claude-Julien Bredin, *Correspondance philosophique et littéraire avec Ballanche*, éd. Auguste Viatte (Paris: Boccard, 1928), 36, 40–41, 51–52, 61, 72–73.

reference to the power and endurance of Etruscan traditions surely echoes Vico's "Second Response."

Vico's evident assumption in *On the Most Ancient Wisdom* of the existence of an ancient wisdom and the principle of its transmission presents a startling contrast to the views he would put forth in the *New Science*. In place of ancient wisdom, the later work posits a bestial first age, crude and fearful fantasies of "robust imaginations", and scathing attacks against the very notion of a "matchless wisdom of the ancients"; and in place of the transmission of wisdom, spontaneity and the independent development of nations. The careful reader must conclude that the primitive world Vico describes in the *New Science* bears little resemblance to that he depicted years earlier in *On the Most Ancient Wisdom* and that in the *New Science* Vico formally renounced his earlier theories.

Ballanche's account of primitive history, particularly the existence of an ancient wisdom and the principle of its transmission, follows the basic assumptions of *On the Most Ancient Wisdom* as closely as it departs from those of the *New Science*. Nevertheless, the underlying structure of the three ages of humanity and specific notions such as the civilizing role of the institutions of religion, marriage, and burial in Ballanche's account unquestionably correspond to the *New Science*. How, then, did Ballanche reconcile the historiographic principles of *On the Most Ancient Wisdom* with the content of the *New Science* when the *New Science* unequivocally repudiates these very principles? The answer seems to be that Ballanche never fully recognized the extent to which the *New Science* abjures the doctrines of *On the Most Ancient Wisdom*. A key text in support of this view is Ballanche's comments on Jules Michelet's 1827 translation of selected passages from the *New Science*.¹⁰⁵ After registering his disagreement with certain specific points in Michelet's interpretation of Vico, Ballanche expresses his hope that Michelet will complete his promised full translation of Vico's works because: "Dans l'état actuel, en effet, les hypothèses hardies de Vico, détachées de la sphère métaphysique où elles ont été conçues, paraissent être isolées les unes des autres, et manquer de leur appuis naturels".¹⁰⁶ Ballanche's objection that Michelet has inappropriately detached Vico's hypotheses from their native metaphysical sphere

¹⁰⁵ Giambattista Vico, *Principes de la philosophie d'histoire*, traduits de la *Scienza nuova* et précédés d'un "Discours sur le système et la vie de l'auteur", par Jules Michelet (Paris: J. Renouard, 1827).

¹⁰⁶ *OC*, 4:377–378.

seems vague until we recall that in 1710 Vico had set out to write, under the umbrella title of *On the Most Ancient Wisdom of the Italians*, a three-part systematic philosophy, one volume of which was to be devoted to each of metaphysics, physics, and moral philosophy. Vico abandoned the project after the first volume so that our *On the Most Ancient Wisdom of the Italians* is in fact Book One of the projected three-volume work and is thus, as its title-page proclaims, a "Book of Metaphysics" (*Liber Primus Metaphysicus*).

We may reformulate Ballanche's criticism of Michelet into a claim that *On the Most Ancient Wisdom* is properly the metaphysical basis of the *New Science*, or, put the other way around, that the *New Science* applies to history the metaphysical principles of *On the Most Ancient Wisdom*. This reading is confirmed when we observe that, in his discussion of *On the Most Ancient Wisdom* in *Prolegomènes*, Ballanche emphasizes the foundational nature of its metaphysics and argues that the book functioned as the point of departure for the *New Science*.¹⁰⁷ Ballanche's reference to Vico's intuitive genius, quoted at the beginning of this section, pertains to *On the Most Ancient Wisdom*. Ballanche concludes his discussion by quoting paragraph 152 of the *New Science* as proof that the arguments of the earlier work had become axiomatic for the later work. If we turn to paragraph 152, we read: "A language of an ancient nation, which has maintained itself as the dominant tongue until it was fully developed, should be a great witness to the customs of the early days of the world." Superficially, this does seem similar to the tracking of pre-Roman Italian wisdom through the Latin language that Vico undertook in *On the Most Ancient Wisdom*. As it is used in the *New Science*, however, this axiom pertains to the natural, spontaneous, and independent development of civilizing institutions among the various peoples of the earth. Shortly before this passage Vico explicitly rejects his earlier hypothesis of the transmission of civilization from one people to other peoples:

This same axiom does away with all the ideas hitherto held concerning the natural law of the gentes, which has been thought to have come out of one first nation and to have been received from it by the others. This error was encouraged by the bad example of the Egyptians and Greeks in vainly boasting that they had spread civilization throughout the world. . . .¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁷ OC, 4:186–203.

¹⁰⁸ Vico, *New Science*, § 146.

Correctly understood, it is apparent that Vico remained faithful only to the philological method and not to the content of his earlier work. Ballanche, however, mistaking constancy of method for constancy of content, never realized the fundamental incompatibility between the two theories of the development of civilization.

How closely, we may ask, did Ballanche read the *New Science*? Dossier 22 in the collection of Ballanche's papers at the Bibliothèque Municipale de Lyon contains nine notebooks on the *New Science*.¹⁰⁹ Before concluding, however, that Ballanche made careful study of the *New Science*, let us note that these notebooks are not the work of Ballanche but of one Fossati, a secretary whom Ballanche employed (see Chapter Twelve). Of the nine notebooks devoted to the *New Science*, one only, XII, bears occasional annotations in Ballanche's hand. Our question, then, may be recast. Did Ballanche read the *New Science* itself or just Fossati's notes? An important clue to this problem is the language in which Vico wrote the *New Science*. Whereas Vico's works prior to the *New Science* were written in Latin, the language of the *New Science* is Italian. Ballanche, having received a sound classical education, read Latin with ease (which, perhaps, is why there are not notebooks on *On the Most Ancient Wisdom*). Yet, Amélie Lenormant, Récamier's niece who had accompanied her aunt and Ballanche to Naples in 1824, later recalled that Ballanche discovered Vico there "à travers les difficultés d'un langage qu'il ne se donna jamais le peine d'apprendre le fond".¹¹⁰ The implication is that Ballanche was reading Vico not in familiar Latin but in Italian, which in turn implies that he was reading the *New Science*. Amélie's testimony, however, is not absolutely conclusive because Vico's dispute with the *Giornale de' letterati d'Italia* over *On the Most Ancient Wisdom* was conducted in Italian. Nevertheless, it is likely that Ballanche would have been introduced to Vico through the *New Science* since it was by 1824 his best

¹⁰⁹ BML MSS 1806–1810, Dossier 22, "Extraits et analyses de divers auteurs anciens", Cahiers XII–XV, 38, and 108–111 (cahiers one to twenty-eight are numbered in Roman numerals, the rest in Arabic numerals). Cahiers XII and XIII are headed "Vico, le *Scienza nuova*, 6 Edit."; XIV and XV: "Vico, le *Scienza nuova*, 2 Edit."; 38: "Observations sur le Vico de M. Michelet"; 108–111: "Encore sur Vico". No notes on *On the Most Ancient Wisdom of the Italians* appear in the dossier.

¹¹⁰ Amélie-Cyvoct Lenormant, *Souvenirs et correspondances tirés des papiers de Mme. Récamier*, 2 vols. (Paris: Lévy, 1860), 1:232. In point of fact, Ballanche read Italian fairly well. In 1819 he had tutored Récamier in the vain hope that interesting her in translating Petrarch would distract her from Chateaubriand. See Ballanche to Récamier, February 1819, in Kettler, *Lettres de Ballanche à Madame Récamier*, 432–433.

known work and ground of his reputation. Further, it is the work most likely to given to someone like Ballanche interested in Roman history and the development of civilization. Dugas-Montbel, in any case, was definitely reading the *New Science*. Finally, Bredin, in reply to a no longer extant letter from Ballanche expressing his excitement at discovering in Vico a kindred spirit, warned Ballanche that Vico's ideas were not as close to his own as he believed: "J'ai enfin commencé ton Vico; j'y trouve des idées qui m'étonnent et qui diffèrent assez des tiennes; mais j'en retrouve qui sont réellement tiennes".¹¹¹ This suggests that Bredin was reading the *New Science*.

In the absence of conclusive evidence, it seems safest to assume that Ballanche read the *New Science*, but that he knew it far less thoroughly than *On the Most Ancient Wisdom*. In any case, Ballanche believed that *On the Most Ancient Wisdom* was the core of Vico's doctrine to which the *New Science* was merely an extension. For Ballanche, the true Vico was not the Vico of the *New Science*, but rather of *On the Most Ancient Wisdom of the Italians*; and his (mis)understanding of the *New Science* may be attributed to his reading it as the application to ancient history of the principles of the development of civilization by the transmission of wisdom of *On the Most Ancient Wisdom*.¹¹²

¹¹¹ Claude-Julien Bredin, 14 September 1825, in *Correspondance philosophique et littéraire avec Ballanche*, éd. Auguste Viatte (Paris: Boccard, 1928), 231.

¹¹² Ballanche's allegiance to the ideas of *On the Most Ancient Wisdom* explains the divergence of his interpretation of Vico from that of Michelet. Although Michelet did publish substantial excerpts from Vico's Latin works, including the full text of *On the Most Ancient Wisdom of the Italians*, in his 1835 collection of selected works (*Oeuvres choisies de Vico*, 2 vols. [Paris: Hachette]), the Vico he admired, and the Vico whose Promethean image he popularized throughout Europe, was derived entirely from the *New Science*. See Arthur McCalla, "Romantic Vicos: Vico and Providence in Michelet and Ballanche" in *Historical Reflections* 19 (1993): 389–408.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

ILLUMINISM

The previous chapter examined the conceptual models of the course of ages in *Palingénésie sociale*. This chapter investigates the motive forces underlying social evolution. Illuminism is an appropriate heading under which to discuss these forces because they are most fully comprehensible in relation to Illuminist doctrines. Moreover, the ideas Ballanche adopted from Illuminism are key to his ultimate merging in a unified philosophy of history of the complexes of terms symbolized by expiation and progress. After introducing Illuminism, and demonstrating Ballanche's familiarity with it, this chapter examines Illuminist themes in *Palingénésie sociale*.

The Western Esoteric Tradition

Antoine Faivre, the scholar most responsible for the recent effort to establish the study of esotericism as a sound academic discipline,¹ defines the Western Esoteric Tradition as a form of thought, dating from the early modern period though possessing ancient roots,² identifiable by the presence of six fundamental characteristics: correspondences, living nature, imagination and mediations, experience of transmutation, praxis of concordance, and transmission. 1) *Correspondences*. "Symbolic and real correspondences are said to exist among all parts of the universe, both seen and unseen. ('As below so above; as above so below'). We find here the ancient idea of microcosm and macrocosm; i.e., the principle of universal interdependence." "These correspondences, considered more or less veiled at first sight, are,

¹ For the historical background to the study of Western Esotericism and methodological proposals for the future development of the field, see Antoine Faivre and Karen-Claire Voss, "Western Esotericism and the Science of Religions" in *Numen* 42 (1995): 48–77. See also Wouter Hanegraaff, "Empirical Method in the Study of Esotericism" in *Method & Theory in the Study of Religion* 7 (1995): 99–129.

² On these roots, see Faivre, "Ancient and Medieval Sources of Modern Esoteric Spirituality" in Antoine Faivre and Jacob Needleman, eds., *Modern Esoteric Spirituality* (New York: Crossroad, 1992), 1–70.

therefore, intended to be read and deciphered. The entire universe is a theatre of mirrors, an ensemble of hieroglyphs to be decoded.”

2) *Living Nature*. The universe is alive, permeated by spiritual forces that circulate through a network of channels. Renaissance *magia* and Paracelsism are simultaneously examples of the knowledge of the dynamic network of sympathies and antipathies that link multilayered, hierarchical Nature together and concrete operations informed by that knowledge. 3) *Imagination and Mediations*. These complementary notions are corollaries of the idea of correspondences. Imagination, considered as an “organ of the soul”, enables access to different levels of reality through the use of mediations such as rituals, symbolic images, mandelas, intermediary spirits. By means of these intermediaries the imagination decodes the hieroglyphs of the cosmos, and uncovers, sees, and knows the mediating entities between the cosmos and the divine world. Imagination, in this sense, is the tool for knowledge of self, world, and myth; it is the eye of fire that pierces the bark of appearances to render the invisible visible. 4) *Experience of Transmutation*. The alchemical term “transmutation” signifies the ontological metamorphosis, or purification of being, of the initiate effected along with and by means of knowledge of and participation in the hidden mysteries of the cosmos and God. 5) *The Praxis of Concordance*. The attempt, particularly marked in the modern period, to establish a common denominator between several or all esoteric traditions. Devotees of the *philosophia perennis* identify a primordial Tradition behind all the esoteric (and religious) traditions of humanity. 6) *Transmission*. Esoteric teaching passes from master to disciple through initiation; the mark of authenticity of esoteric knowledge is filiation to an established line of transmission.³

Faivre identifies numerous esoteric currents in the West since the fourteenth century: philosophical alchemy; Renaissance *philosophia occulta* and Christian Kabbalah; Paracelsianism and later *Naturphilosophie*; the theosophy of Jakob Boehme and his followers; seventeenth-century Rosicrucianism and subsequent initiatic societies; and Hermetism, or the reception in modern times of the Greek texts attributed to Hermes

³ Antoine Faivre, *Access to Western Esotericism* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1994), 10–15. An abridged version is presented in Faivre and Voss, “Western Esotericism and the Science of Religions”, 60–62. Faivre calls the first four characteristics “intrinsic”, i.e., they must be present if something is to be identified as esoteric. The final two characteristics are “secondary” in that they are frequently found in conjunction with the others, but are not fundamental.

Trismegistus.⁴ These currents together comprise the Western Esoteric Tradition. The word “occult” (lit. “hidden”) and its cognates are sometimes used, as in Viatte’s classic *Les Sources occultes du Romantisme*, to signify what we have been discussing as esotericism. This usage dates from the middle of the nineteenth century when Eliphas Lévi (Alphonse-Louis Constant, 1818–1875) applied “occult”, derived from Henricus Cornelius Agrippa’s *De Occulta philosophia* (1533), to designate a group of investigations and practices having to do with such “sciences” as astrology, magic, alchemy, and the Kabbalah. Although a few scholars continue to use “occultism” as a synonym for “esotericism”, the term is increasingly reserved for the specific current within the Western Esoteric Tradition that begins with Lévi and peaks with the activities of H. P. Blavatsky’s Theosophical Society around the turn of the century.⁵

Though the noun “esotericism” (*ésotérisme*) was used for the first time in approximately Faivre’s sense by Ballanche’s contemporary, Jacques Matter,⁶ Ballanche himself speaks (as did the Romantics in general) of the Western Esoteric Tradition as “*théosophie*” or “*Illuminisme*”. These terms refer to specific currents within the Esoteric tradition. “Theosophy”, used synonymously with “theology” by the Church Fathers, gradually came to designate, in Faivre’s definition: “a gnosis that has a bearing not only on the salvific relations the individual maintains with the divine world, but also on the nature of God Himself, or of divine persons, and on the natural universe, the origin of that universe, the hidden structures that constitute it in its actual state, its relationship to mankind, and its final ends”.⁷ This definition was firmly established by the end of the sixteenth century. In the next century, the term theosophy became inextricably associated with Jakob Boehme (1575–1624). Boehme set out his theosophy in a series of books, of which *De Signatura rerum* (1622) and *Mysterium Magnum* (1623) are perhaps the most important.⁸ Reinterpreting the

⁴ Faivre and Voss, “Western Esotericism and the Science of Religions”, 49.

⁵ Faivre, *Access to Western Esotericism*, 34–35.

⁶ J. Matter, *Histoire critique du gnosticisme et de son influence* (Paris: 1828). Matter linked early gnosticism to eighteenth-century esotericism. Faivre and Voss, “Western Esotericism and the Science of Religions”, 56.

⁷ Faivre, *Access to Western Esotericism*, 23.

⁸ On Boehme, see Pierre Deghaye, “Jacob Boehme and His Followers” in Faivre and Needleman, eds., *Modern Esoteric Spirituality*, 214–229 and Andrew Weeks, *Boehme: An Intellectual Biography of the Seventeenth-Century Philosopher and Mystic* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1991).

creatio ex nihilo of the Genesis narrative as a *creatio ex Deo*, in which the world is created by God solely out of God, Boehme understands Creation not as a historical event but rather an ongoing and eternal emanation, by which God's presence pervades the world and each soul. The Fall dispersed an angelic, androgynous Adam into familiar humanity dwelling in a material world of generation, suffering, and evil. Redemption from the Fall, or the reintegration of the Universal Adam, is a process of return, by which emanated creation comes to realize its identity with the divine. Boehme's theosophy reads the signs by which the divine world is reflected in our world; the theosophical life is the progressive recognition by individuals of the divine truths—which comprise, in fact, knowledge of the hidden God—that lie in the interior of the self. In Boehme's emanationist creationism, the divine *Fiat* of Creation is the same as the divine Word and light of redemption by which the Fall is overcome.

The word and concept "theosophy" entered mainstream philosophical vocabulary in the eighteenth century, thanks chiefly to Jacob Brucker's chapters on theosophy in his *Kurze Fragen aus der Philosophischen Historie* (1715) and especially in his highly influential Latin work *Historia critica Philosophiae* (1741). Though Brucker himself was no friend of theosophy, his account remained the standard reference throughout the Enlightenment and into the Romantic period. The word "*théosophie*" entered French usage with Diderot's lengthy article, "Theosophes", in his *Encyclopédie*, which reproduces, without acknowledgement, entire passages from Brucker.⁹ A contemporary of Diderot, meanwhile, was working out his own theosophical system, volume after volume. Emanuel Swedenborg (1688–1772) abandoned his scientific and philosophical activities in 1745 as a result of dreams that transformed his inner life. In the *Arcana coelestia* (8 vols., 1747–1758) and the works that followed, Swedenborg elaborated a complex, original theosophical system based on the esoteric principles of emanation, unity, correspondence, will, light, and regeneration.

"Illuminism", for its part, is a subset of the Western Esoteric Tradition corresponding to the years 1770–1815.¹⁰ There is a strong Boehmian component to Illuminism (hence the Romantics' tendency to equate Illuminism and theosophy), though other esoteric currents are also

⁹ Faivre, *Access to Western Esotericism*, 25–26. Ballanche cites Brucker's *Historia critica Philosophiae* once: *OC*, 4:255.

¹⁰ Faivre, *Access to Western Esotericism*, 72.

present. The chief representatives of French Illuminism are Martinès de Pasqually (1727–1774), Louis-Claude de Saint-Martin, le Philosophe inconnu, (1743–1803), and Antoine Fabre d'Olivet (1767–1825).

Martinès de Pasqually, who summed up his doctrines in the late work, *Traité de la Réintégration des Êtres* (1771, privately distributed), most likely drew his primary inspiration from a Christianized version of the Kabbalah. Martinès taught that the reintegration of fallen humanity with God begins with repentance and expiation and is a matter of bringing our will into realignment with the divine will. Fallen humanity, however, is cut off from the divine will. In order to know it and therefore to have the possibility of realigning our will with it, humanity needs the help of spiritual beings intermediary between the divine and human realms. Such assistance requires a means of communicating with these pure astral beings, hence theurgy, or operational magic, is an essential part of Martinès' theosophy. Martinès' theurgy also provides protection against demonic astral beings who seek to perpetuate humanity's fallen state. Martinèsian theurgy is not simply magic; it requires moral virtue, faith, and a knowledge of doctrine. Moreover, the development and successful exercise of theurgic powers indicates an individual's progress toward reintegration. Final reintegration, or the return of all emanated spiritual beings to their origin, will be accomplished by a combination of theurgy and prayer. Martinès institutionalized his theosophy, and its transmission from master to disciple through initiation, in his quasi-Masonic Ordre des Elus Cohens, founded in 1754.¹¹

Though Louis-Claude de Saint-Martin is the major intermediary through whom Boehme's thought reached the early nineteenth century, his Illuminist career began under the direction of Martinès de Pasqually. *Des erreurs et de la vérité* (1775) and *Tableau naturel* (1782) date from this early period. The turning point came when Saint-Martin was introduced to Boehme's writings by Friedrich-Rudolf Saltzmann sometime during his residency in Strasbourg between 1788 and 1791. Under the influence of Boehme, Saint-Martin moved

¹¹ Alice Joly, *Un Mystique lyonnais et les Secrets de la franc-maçonnerie, Jean-Baptiste Willemoz 1730–1824* (Paris: Demeter, 1986 [1938]), 38; Louis-Claude de Saint-Martin, *Oeuvres Majeures*, 5 vols., éd. Robert Amadou (Hildesheim, New York: Georg Olms Verlag, 1975–1990), 1:20–21*, 27–28*. On Martinès, see also Auguste Viatte, *Les Sources occultes du romantisme*, 2 vols. (Paris: Champion, 1928), 1:45–63 and René le Forestier, *La Franc-Maçonnerie templière et occultiste aux XVIII^e et XIX^e siècles*, publié par Antoine Faivre (Paris: Aubier-Montaigne, 1970), 290–313.

steadily away from Martinès. He particularly rejected commerce with the intermediary beings of the astral realm through the theurgic ritual of the Elus Cohens, insisting instead that reintegration is to be achieved through imitation of Christ in the manner of Boehme's *The Way to Christ* (1624). Saint-Martin translated Boehme into French and wrote work after work permeated with Boehmism: *L'Homme de désir* (1790); *Le Nouvel homme* and *Ecce Homo* (1792); *Le Ministère de l'Homme-Esprit* and *De l'Esprit des choses* (1802). These works teach that humanity subsists in a state of forgetfulness of its true nature owing to the Fall, but that its true intellectual (i.e., spiritual) nature renders it susceptible to receive the light emanating from the divine intelligence that permeates the universe. Saint-Martin calls the circulation of spiritual forces through the universe "divine *magisme*". Through contemplation (the soul as mirror), humanity can awaken to consciousness of its true nature and to the operation of divine *magisme*, discerning the spiritual glory hidden under the appearances of sensible nature.¹² Saint-Martin calls souls who, moved by desire for God, acquire knowledge of the interior truths *hommes de désir*. *Hommes de désir* imitate Christ both in incarnating consciousness of the Word (divine truths) and in expiating the fallen world through sacrificial suffering. For Saint-Martin, the mystical life is a process of spiritualization, through which suffering humanity extends and will eventually complete Christ's work and bring about reintegration.¹³

Martinèsism and Martinism, or the Illuminisms of Martinès de Pasqually and of Saint-Martin, are reconciled in the thought of the Lyonnais Jean-Baptiste Willermoz (1730–1824). Initiated by Martinès around 1766, Willermoz became his most active disciple. After the master's death in 1794, he made Lyon the centre of Martinèsism. Willermoz was also a friend, correspondent, and sometime host of Saint-Martin until their rupture in 1790; Saint-Martin wrote his first book, *Des erreurs et de la vérité*, while staying with Willermoz. Despite the cooling of their friendship after Saint-Martin broke with Martinès, Willermoz incorporated elements of Saint-Martin's later theosophy into his own thought. Throughout his long life Willermoz was an

¹² Brian Juden, *Traditions orphiques et tendances mystiques dans le romantisme français (1800–1855)* (Paris: Klincksieck, 1971), 177.

¹³ Frank Paul Bowman, "Illuminism, utopia, and mythology" in D. G. Charlton, *The French Romantics* 2 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984, 1:84; Pierre Deghaye, "Jacob Boehme and His Followers", 245–246.

indefatigable founder of and propagandist for various Illumino-Masonic societies.¹⁴

Though no French Swedenborgian of this period remotely approached the stature or influence of Saint-Martin, Swedenborg did have numerous and active French disciples. His works were introduced into France around 1770 by Dom Pernéty, the former Benedictine who had served as librarian to Frederick II and founded a lodge at Avignon; in 1778 Daillant de la Touche wrote a summary of Swedenborg's chief ideas; and a complete French translation of Swedenborg's works by Jean-Pierre Moët appeared between 1819 and 1824.¹⁵

An Illuminist much less well known and much less reputable than Saint-Martin—both among contemporaries and among scholars of Illuminism—but an immensely important influence on French Romanticism is the self-proclaimed Neo-Pythagorian, Fabre d'Olivet, whom we have already encountered more than once in relation to Ballanche.¹⁶ Immensely curious and massively erudite, Fabre d'Olivet was an autodidact who acknowledged no master and belonged to no sect. Nevertheless, even if he never met Saint-Martin, Fabre was in constant contact with friends and disciples of *le Philosophe inconnu* from 1800 onwards. Similarly, though he was never initiated into the Elus Cohens, Fabre was thoroughly acquainted with the theurgic activities of Martinès de Pasqually and Willermoz. He is unusual (although not unique) among Illuminists in that he makes no pretence that his system is Christian.¹⁷

Fabre d'Olivet, like Ballanche, believed himself elected by providence to reveal the divine will to his generation. His principal works are *Les Vers dorés de Pythagore* (1813); *La Langue hébraïque restituée* (1810, published in 1816/1817); *Histoire philosophique du genre humain* (1824; first published in 1822 as *De l'Etat social de l'homme*); and *Cain. Mystère dramatique de Lord Byron* (1823). *Vers dorés* introduces Fabre's theosophical

¹⁴ The fundamental study on Willermoz is still Joly, *Un Mystique lyonnais, Jean-Baptiste Willermoz*. See also Edmond Mazet, "Freemasonry and Esotericism" in Faivre and Needleman, *Modern Esoteric Spirituality*, 248–276. On Illuminism in Lyon, see Joseph Buche, *L'Ecole mystique de Lyon* (Paris: Alcan, 1935), 17–34.

¹⁵ See Gwendolyn Buys, *The Orphic Vision: Seer Poets from Novalis to Rimbaud* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1964), 76. On the activities of French Swedenborgians during the Restoration, see Auguste Viatte, "Les Swedenborgiens en France de 1820 à 1830" in *Revue de littérature comparée* 11 (1931): 416–450.

¹⁶ The major study of Fabre d'Olivet is Léon Cellier, *Fabre d'Olivet. Contribution à l'Etude des Aspects religieux du romantisme* (Paris: Nizet, 1953).

¹⁷ Cellier, *Fabre d'Olivet*, 113, 115.

views in the form of a commentary on his translation of Pythagoras' *Golden Verses*. It is prefaced by a lengthy discourse, "Sur l'essence et la forme de la poésie". *La Langue hébraïque restituée* is Fabre's free translation and commentary on the first five books of the Bible in which he claims to have restored the sacred language of the ancient Hebrews, lost since the Babylonian Captivity, and reestablished the (theosophical) cosmogony of Moses. *De l'Etat social de l'homme*, Fabre's exposition of the 12,000 year history of the human race from earliest times to Bonaparte, is a philosophical history built on the cosmogonic principles set out in his earlier books. He republished it two years later in the vain hope that the more fashionable title, *Histoire philosophique du genre humain*, would increase its sales. The cosmogonic drama of *Cain* purports to refute Byron's "blasphemous" version of the Genesis story by translating it together with a corrective commentary drawn from Fabre's own speculations on the meaning of Genesis in *La Langue hébraïque restituée*.

These major figures in no way dry up the Illuminist current. The host of minor figures surrounding them are displayed and classified in the works of Faivre, Viatte, and other scholars listed in their bibliographies. One final figure, or rather tradition, that warrants notice here as contributing significantly to the Illuminism encountered by Ballanche is that originating from the work of the Austrian doctor, Franz Anton Mesmer (1734–1815).

Eighteenth-century theosophists had applied the esoteric principle of living nature to the investigation of magnetic and electrical phenomena.¹⁸ Mesmer's animal magnetism, which claimed to manipulate an invisible, weightless fluid that flows everywhere and serves as a vehicle for mutual influence among heavenly bodies, Earth, and living things, applied to therapeutics the esoteric principle of the linkage of all things through sympathies and correspondences.¹⁹ Mesmer moved his practice to Paris in 1778, where his claims were soon investigated by a committee of the Royal Academy of Sciences. Their 1784 report strongly implied that he was a quack. That same year, the Marquis de Puységur and his brother, Count Maxim, began to try out techniques they had learned from Mesmer on peasants at

¹⁸ For example, the Pietist F. C. Oetinger. See Ernst Benz, *The Theology of Electricity*, trans. Wolfgang Taraba (Allison Park, PA: Pickwick Publication, 1989 [original German edition 1970]).

¹⁹ This account is taken from Joscelyn Godwin, *The Theosophical Enlightenment* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1994), 151–154, 160–161, 234.

their country estate. The Puységurs found that their subjects, instead of experiencing a violent phase, or “crisis”, typical of Mesmer’s therapy, passed into a calm, sleep-like condition, which they dubbed somnambulism. While in this somnambulistic state their subjects were able to diagnose their own ailments and displayed extrasensory perceptions. In their analysis of the phenomenon, the Puységurs’ stressed the action of the will in producing somnambulistic states. To Mesmer’s dismay, the Puységurs soon abandoned medicine, regarding their mesmerized subjects not as patients but as mediums allowing communication with the world of spirits.

Mesmerism declined in France in the 1790s. Aside from the Academy report, mesmerism suffered during the Revolution from its links with the aristocracy and was tarred by association with Cagliostro and other charlatans. In Germany, however, Johann Caspar Lavater (1741–1801), whose famous art of physiognomy was similarly based on the doctrine of correspondences, transmitted the Puységurs’ version of mesmerism to the *Naturphilosophen*. Franz von Baader (1765–1841), for example, concluded that in “magnetic ecstasy” (the equivalent of the Puységurs’ somnambulism) the subject enters a different sphere of being, a higher and more universal condition of life that relates to the bodily senses as an organic being compares with an inorganic one. Similarly, Heinrich Jung-Stilling (1740–1817), Professor of Political Economy at Heidelberg and Marburg Universities and a friend of Lavater, Herder, and Goethe, interpreted the magnetized state as resembling, and in fact proving, the state of the soul after death, when it loses all connection with the sense-world and finds itself among beings of its own affinity. From Mesmer to the Puységurs to Baader and Jung-Stilling, mesmerism passed quickly through three stages of development: first, a cure for the sick; then a technique for mediumship; and finally a direct route to mystical experience.

French interest in mesmerism revived following the 1813 publication of *Histoire critique du magnétisme animal* by J. F. P. Deleuze, Librarian and Professor of Natural History at the Jardin des Plantes. Another influential proponent of mesmerism during the Restoration was Alexandre Bertrand (1795–1831), author of *Traité du somnambulisme* (1823) and *Du magnétisme animal en France* (1826).²⁰ On the medical side,

²⁰ Bertrand also contributed a series of articles to the *Globe* on great religious ecstasies (1825) and another series on his researches into somnambulism, sorcery, lycanthropy, possession, trances, and mystical ecstasy (1829). Bertrand’s esotericism influenced his friend Pierre Leroux, and through him, George Sand. Yves Vadé,

mesmerism was applied at the Hôtel-Dieu hospital in Paris in 1819–1820 to cases of “hysteria” and in 1821 Dr. J.-C.-A. Récamier (the cousin of Jacques-Rose) performed the first surgery on a mesmerically anaesthetized patient. Mesmerism continued in use as an anaesthetic in surgery throughout the 1830s and 1840s until superseded by the discovery of a more respectable anaesthesia: ether. Medical applications, however, were only one aspect of the revival of mesmerism. Deleuze had been a pupil of the Puységurs, and the spiritualist aspect of mesmeric practice was more prominent in French society as a whole than the medical. Mesmeric clairvoyance of the sort demonstrated by the Puységurs’ subjects was extremely popular throughout the Restoration and July Monarchy, and not just as a parlour game. The Dominican preacher Henri Lacordaire praised the spiritual value of animal magnetism from the pulpit of Notre Dame as late as the 1840s.²¹ Viatte sums up the vogue for mesmerism at this time with the phrase: “Il pleut des magnétiseurs, à chaque coin de rue”.²²

Illuminists were quick to seize on mesmeric phenomena as scientific proof of their teachings. Théodore Boys, in *Nouvelles considérations sur les Oracles, les Sibylles et les Prophètes* (1806), and D’Hénin de Cuviller, in *Le Magnétisme animal retrouvé dans l’Antiquité* (1821), concluded that Mesmer had rediscovered the intuitive vision of the future possessed by sacred poets and ancient prophets that had been lost through civilization and logic. T.-P. Boulage, in *Des Mystères d’Isis* (1820), similarly counted magnetism and somnambulism among the sciences unveiled to initiates in the great mysteries of the ancient world.²³ Saint-Martin himself explored magnetism and described the fallen condition of the soul as a state of somnambulism. Fabre d’Olivet was a practising magnetizer. Both men protested against the name *animal* magnetism on the grounds that it degrades what they considered to be a high spiritual phenomenon.²⁴ Willermoz was deeply involved with mesmerism in Lyon in 1784 and 1785.²⁵

L’Enchantement littéraire: Écriture et magie de Chateaubriand à Rimbaud (Paris: Gallimard, 1990), 243 n. 1.

²¹ Lacordaire’s preface to Henri-Marie Delaage, *Le Monde occulte* (Paris: Dentu, 1856), affirms his faith in animal magnetism. See Buys, *The Orphic Vision*, 76, 277 n. 18; see also Vadé, *L’Enchantement littéraire*, 272. Delaage was a friend of Gérard de Nerval.

²² Auguste Viatte, *Victor Hugo et les illuminés de son temps* (Montréal: Éditions de l’Arbre, 1943), 22.

²³ Juden, *Traditions orphiques et tendances mystiques*, 165.

²⁴ Cellier, *Fabre d’Olivet*, 180–181, 314–316.

²⁵ Joly, *Un mystique lyonnaise, Jean-Baptiste Willermoz*, 215–240.

From Martinès to Fabre d'Olivet, from *hommes de désir* to magnetized clairvoyants, Illuminism, as a historical phenomenon, represents a synthetic response to the dialectic of orthodox Christianity and the Enlightenment. Embracing the eighteenth-century revalorization of human nature, Illuminism refuses to see humanity as an abject creature humbled before the divine mysteries of the universe; yet, at the same time it combats the Enlightenment repudiation of religion by bathing humanity in these very divine mysteries. "Ce 'siècle des lumières' est aussi celui des illuminés".²⁶ In fact, both before and after Illuminism, the entire Western Esoteric Tradition is characterized by its synthesis of intellectual curiosity and mystical religiosity.

Ballanche and Illuminism

Ballanche was coy about his relations with Illuminism. In 1835 he told his friend, the comtesse d'Hautefeuille, that he had never been able to understand either Saint-Martin or Swedenborg, though he had read a lot of the latter.²⁷ This disclaimer must be taken with several grains of salt as the implacably orthodox Hautefeuille, author of a work on the dangers of magnetism,²⁸ would have had little tolerance for the heterodox tendencies of most Illuminists. In fact, Ballanche's familiarity with Illuminism was deep and long-standing.

Along with Bredin, Ampère, and the other members of the *Société chrétienne* back in Lyon under the Empire, Ballanche had had the opportunity to investigate Illuminism first hand since Lyon was also the home of J. B. Willermoz. The young men, however, seem not to have been aware of Willermoz and they certainly never took the short excursion across the Rhône to visit him at Brotteaux. Willermoz's habitual secrecy regarding Illuminist matters partly explains his obscurity, but more important was the social gulf, wider than the Rhône, that separated them. Willermoz's family was petit bourgeois, only a slippery step above the artisanate, whereas the young members

²⁶ René Jasinski, *Histoire de la littérature française*, 2 vols. (Paris: Boivin, 1947), 2:124. Quoted in D. G. Charlton, *Secular Religions in France, 1815–1870* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1963), 127.

²⁷ Ballanche to Hautefeuille, 5 September 1835, in Alfred Marquiset, *Ballanche et Mme. d'Hautefeuille* (Paris: Champion, 1912), 55.

²⁸ Mme. d'Hautefeuille, *Marguerite ou la Science funeste* (Paris: 1847). See Agnès Kettler, *Lettres de Ballanche à Madame Récamier, 1812–1845* (Paris: Champion, 1996), 182.

of the *Société chrétienne* belonged to the upper bourgeoisie. And though this class had been a prime recruiting ground for Illumino-masonic lodges in the late eighteenth century (Bredin's father and Millanois, the business partner of Ballanche's father, had both been members of the Lyon lodge *De la Bienfaisance* founded by Willermoz), this was no longer so after the Revolution. Willermoz remained unknown to Ballanche and his friends; what they knew of Martinès de Pasqually and Saint-Martin, they knew from other sources.²⁹

Swedenborg's doctrines were known to Ballanche's circle through various friends and acquaintances. J. M. Degérando, despite his reservations about mysticism, welcomed into his home Zacharias Werner along with Friedrich Schlegel, whom Germaine de Staël had recommended to him. Moreover, Mme. Degérando was related to the Berckheim family and through them to Julie de Krüdener (1764–1824), the Russian aristocrat and mystical prophetess who helped inspire Tsar Alexander I with the idea of the Holy Alliance and who in later years was friendly with the Récamier salon.³⁰ Camille Jordan was in correspondence with both Krüdener and Lavater, whom he had visited in Zurich with Germaine de Staël during their exile by Napoleon. Finally, the Swiss Swedenborgian pastor, J. F. Oberlin, devoted considerable energy to his attempts to convert Ampère.³¹

Swedenborg and his epigoni, however, pale as an influence beside Jakob Boehme. The Lyon friends were first introduced to Boehme's works by Jacques Roux, who had discovered them during his exile in Germany.³² Bredin in particular was immediately, deeply, and permanently entranced. He translated some of Boehme's works (none of his translations survive) and wrote commentaries on them, evidently for private use. By 1816 Bredin was recommending Boehme to his friends as the greatest interpreter of Christianity.³³ Two years later he told his Swiss Protestant friend, Pastor Touchon, that he

²⁹ Joly, *Un Mystique lyonnais, Jean-Baptiste Willermoz*, 308–309.

³⁰ On Krüdener, see Viatte, *Les Sources occultes*, 2:188–213.

³¹ Jacques Roos, *Aspects littéraires du mysticisme philosophique et l'influence de Boehme et de Swedenborg au début du Romantisme: William Blake, Novalis, Ballanche* (Strasbourg: Heitz, 1951), 359–361.

³² Viatte, *Les Sources occultes du romantisme*, 2:224.

³³ Bredin to Ampère, autumn 1816, in Ampère et Ampère, *Correspondance et souvenirs de 1805 à 1864*. Recueillis par Madame H. Cheuveux, 2 vols. (Paris: Hertz, 1875), 1:97. For Ampère's eagerness to hear of Boehme's doctrines from Bredin, Ampère to Bredin, 9 October 1816, in Ampère, *Correspondance du grand Ampère*, 2 vols., éd. Louis de Launay (Paris: Gauthier-Villars, 1936), 2:515, 520.

always had with him either the Bible or Boehme; and by 1820 his admiration for Boehme had increased to the point that he valued him above all other authors.³⁴ Bredin encouraged Ballanche to read Boehme, evidently with some success:

Je ne saurais trop te remercier de tes extraits de J. Boehme, ils m'intéressent vivement et me seront fort utiles. Je connaissais Boehme de nom, mais je n'avais rien lu de lui. Tu as eu une excellente pensée de me faire ces traductions, et d'y joindre tes lumineuses réflexions qui me les rendent intelligibles. Grâce à toi, je commence à connaître et à apprécier ce penseur. Depuis que j'ai lu ces choses si profondes et toutes nouvelles pour moi, je ne cesse de les méditer.³⁵

Bredin often brings Boehme, and to a lesser extent Saint-Martin, into his comments on Ballanche's works.³⁶ Boehme and Saint-Martin confirmed Ballanche and his friends in their conviction that the true meaning of Christianity was not limited to the interpretations of the institutional Churches.³⁷

By the late 1820s Ballanche would also have heard the Boehmist case pleaded by Mme. Swetchine (née Sophie Soïmonoff), one of Joseph de Maistre's converts from the fashionable skepticism of the Saint Petersburg court. Exiled from Russia, Swetchine met Juliette Récamier in Italy in 1823, and back settled in Paris they became great friends. Ballanche saw a lot of Swetchine, since in the late 1820s she too lived at the Abbaye-aux-Bois, and they happily discussed at length the philosophical speculations that preoccupied them both. Ballanche continued to see her in the early 1830s, when her salon on the rue Saint-Dominique had become the centre of a pious Catholicism of decidedly liberal tinge.³⁸ The letters collected by Marquiset in *Ballanche et Madame d'Hautefeuille* contain numerous references to Swetchine. Illuminism was a subject that divided the Récamier salon

³⁴ Bredin to Touchon, 21 July 1818 and 25 July 1820, in Bredin, *Lettres inédites de Claude-Julien Bredin*, éd. Louis de Launay (Lyon: Rey, 1936), 112, 126.

³⁵ Ballanche to Bredin, ca. 1817, in Claude-Julien Bredin, *Correspondance philosophique et littéraire avec Ballanche*. Publiée et commentée par Auguste Viatte (Paris: Boccard, 1928), 153.

³⁶ For example, Bredin, *Correspondance philosophique et littéraire avec Ballanche*, 148–153.

³⁷ Jean-René Derré, "Lumières, Illuminisme chrétien et pensée mystique dans la *Ville des Expiations*" in Mario Matucci, éd., *Lumières et Illuminisme* (Pisa: Pacini, 1984), 241.

³⁸ Viatte, *Les Sources occultes du romantisme*, 2:74–75; Amélie-Cyvoct Lenormant, *Souvenirs et correspondances tirés des papiers de Madame Récamier*, 2 vols. (Paris: Lévy, 1860), 2:161; Philip Spencer, *Politics of Belief in Nineteenth-Century France* (London: Faber and Faber, 1954), 54–55.

as surely and perhaps as regularly, as politics. During a conversation about ghosts and supernatural manifestations in 1833, for example, Ballanche and Mme. Chateaubriand argued for their existence against Chateaubriand's mocking scepticism. Eugène de Genoude, prompted by Juliette Récamier, reminisced about testimonies by Puységur and Saint-Martin, whom he had met in the company of the duchesse de Bourbon years before, to the existence of the supernatural.³⁹

The admiration in which Ballanche and his friends held Fabre d'Olivet is amply attested by their correspondence. On 23 June 1811 Ballanche informs Beuchot, the family's business agent in Paris, of the safe arrival in Lyon of Fabre's *Notions sur le sens de l'ouïe*. In June 1814 Bredin inquires of Ampère, now in Paris: "As-tu lu les *Vers dorés de Pythagore*, de Fabre d'Olivet? Lis-les! Roux, Ballanche, et moi, en avons été enchantés". In August 1816 Bredin asks Ampère: "Demande des renseignements sur le caractère de Fabre d'Olivet, je voudrais savoir ce qu'il en est." In October 1816 Ampère sends *La Langue hébraïque restituée* to Bredin. Ballanche, for his part, reads *La Langue hébraïque restituée* and speaks of it to Ampère.⁴⁰ For the group of friends, the publication of *La Langue hébraïque restituée* was nothing less than a providential event:

Mais rien arrive-t-il ici-bas que par l'ordre de la Providence, et pense à quel moment ce livre paraît, à quelle époque de l'histoire morale des sociétés il vient de rattacher! Il paraît qu'à bien d'autres époques, les mêmes idées ont été connues des personnes qui les ont enveloppés dans l'obscurité; les temps n'étaient pas encore venus. La liaison de tout, les livres de Boehme, d'après ce que m'en a écrit Bredin; ils se lient de si près à celui de Fabre.⁴¹

As here, the friends did not always distinguish clearly among the various Illuminists they read.

Bredin's letters to Ballanche, in which he develops ideas dear to him, abound in references to Fabre's ideas: etymologies, translations of Genesis, considerations on speech, its origin, and influence on thought, analyses of the role of the will. In the course of Bredin's critique of an early draft of *Orphée*, he queries Ballanche's rejection

³⁹ "Ce qui s'est dit à l'Abbaye-au-Bois le 19 juin 1833" from the *Mémoires inédites* du comte A. de Montesquiou in the *Figaro littéraire* (16 February 1957). Quoted and discussed in Léon Cellier, *Parcours Initiatiques* (Neuchâtel and Grenoble: A la Baconnière; Presses Universitaires de Grenoble, 1977), 45–46.

⁴⁰ All quoted in Cellier, *Fabre d'Olivet*, 337–338.

⁴¹ Ampère to Ballanche, 26 October 1816, in *Correspondance du grand Ampère*, 2:518.

in Book II of Fabre's etymology of Orpheus. In the published version of *Orphée* Fabre's etymology appears beside Ballanche's original one.⁴² When Bredin read *L'Etat social de l'homme* immediately on its publication in 1822, he wrote to Ballanche: "Connais-tu l'ouvrage de Fabre d'Olivet: *de l'Etat Social de l'Homme*? J'en avais entrepris la lecture, je vais le reprendre; si j'avais le temps, je t'en parlerais".⁴³ As late as 1829 Bredin was urging Ballanche to remain faithful to the system of *Histoire philosophique*.⁴⁴ Ballanche was also thoroughly familiar with yet another of Fabre d'Olivet's works. He considered *Cain. Mystère dramatique de Byron* (1823) important, and wrote an appreciative review of it for the journal *Tablettes Universelles*. Ballanche's article was never published and has been lost, though a draft is preserved in Dossier 19 of his papers at the Bibliothèque Municipale de Lyon.⁴⁵ *Tablettes Universelles*, founded in 1820 and edited by young Liberals and Doctrinaires, some of whom would later found the *Globe* and the republican *National*, seems an odd choice for Ballanche's review of Fabre's book. Still, it was not ideological considerations that prevented its publication. *Tablettes Universelles* was acquired in late January 1824 by a royalist combine seeking to buy out the opposition press.⁴⁶ *Tablettes* was either defunct, or soon to be so, when Ballanche submitted his review.

Ballanche had sent Fabre d'Olivet a copy of *Antigone* in 1815. When he moved to Paris in 1817 Fabre d'Olivet was evidently high on the list of luminaries whom he hoped to meet. "Est-ce que vous n'avez pas encore vu Fabre d'Olivet", Bredin demanded of Ballanche soon after his arrival in the capital.⁴⁷ Ballanche and Fabre did meet, although how often is uncertain. According to Saint-Beuve, they saw each other more than once, but rarely.⁴⁸ Cellier thinks they met more frequently than Sainte-Beuve allows, noting that Fabre d'Olivet lived

⁴² Bredin, *Correspondance philosophique et littéraire avec Ballanche*, 47–48; OC, 5:164–166. Fabre's etymology appears in *Vers dorés de Pythagore* (Paris: 1813; reprinted Paris: L'Age d'homme, 1978), 37.

⁴³ Bredin to Ballanche, 24 September 1822, in *Correspondance philosophique et littéraire avec Ballanche*, 201.

⁴⁴ Bredin to Ballanche, 1 May 1829, in *Correspondance philosophique et littéraire avec Ballanche*, 271–276.

⁴⁵ For Ballanche's attempts to trace his article, see Cellier, *Fabre d'Olivet*, 339.

⁴⁶ Charles Desgranges, *La Presse littéraire sous la Restauration, 1815–1830* (Paris: 1907; reprinted Genève: Slatkine, 1973), 149–154.

⁴⁷ Bredin to Ballanche, 11 October 1817, in Bredin, *Correspondance philosophique et littéraire avec Ballanche*, 38.

⁴⁸ Sainte-Beuve, *Portraits contemporains*, 5 vols. (Paris: Lévy, 1869–1871), 2:45.

near Ballanche, that Fabre borrowed money from Ballanche around 1822, that Ballanche came to find him in 1823 before his trip to Italy with Juliette Récamier because he wanted to discuss his review of *Cain*, and that after Fabre's death people wanting information about the mysterious theosophist sought out Ballanche (in 1838 Ballanche showed the musicographer Joseph d'Ortigue where to find Fabre's unpublished work on music).⁴⁹ Cellier's evidence seems compelling, though it should also be noted that their interactions were not always harmonious. Each man believed himself to be in unique possession of God's will for contemporary society; discussion between prophets is rarely collegial.

Ballanche knew many magnetizers in both Lyon and Paris. One of Ballanche's fellow members of the Académie de Lyon was Jacques Pététin, a respected doctor and famous magnetizer. On 9 September 1807 Ballanche wrote excitedly to Beuchot that they were about to reprint Pététin's major work on animal magnetism, *Électricité animal. Prouvée par la découverte des phénomènes physiques et moraux de la Catalepsie hystérique* (2nd ed. 1808). Ballanche's friend Aimé Martin gave the eulogy at Pététin's funeral later that year.⁵⁰ Another member of the Académie de Lyon with interests in the general area of magnetism was one Piestre, whose *Observations psychologiques et physiognomoniques sur la nouvelle doctrine du professeur Gall* (an XI [1803]) examined sympathetically the phrenological system developed by Franz Josef Gall (1785–1828) as an offshoot of Lavater's physiognomy. That Ballanche kept in touch with Piestre in Paris is demonstrated by Bredin's letter of 14 September 1825, in which he tells Ballanche that he has told someone to ask him for Piestre's address and gives Ballanche some local news to pass on to Piestre.⁵¹ In Paris, Ballanche became firm friends with the magnetizer Johann Carl Passavant.⁵² As usual, when one of the Lyon friends made an interesting acquaintance the others were soon included:

J'ai reçu avant-hier une lettre de Passavant; il m'enverra l'ouvrage qu'il a fait sur la *Vie magnétique*. Tu le verras bientôt à Paris: tu le mettras en rapport avec Ampère, Dugas, Degérando, etc. Je crois qu'Ampère

⁴⁹ Cellier, *Fabre d'Olivet*, 338–340.

⁵⁰ Busst, in *VH*, 93–94.

⁵¹ Bredin, *Correspondance philosophique et littéraire avec Ballanche*, 231. The science of physiognomy is taught in the Ville des Expiations. See *VE*, 122–123.

⁵² For a contemporary account of Passavant, a disciple of Franz von Baader, see Victor Cousin, *Fragments et souvenirs* (Paris: Didier, 3^e éd. 1857), 68–71.

et lui seront bien aise de se connaître; tu sais combien il t'aime; peut-être reprendra-t-il son projet de faire de toi un magnétiseur.⁵³

Though the project of making a magnetizer out of Ballanche seems to have come to nothing,⁵⁴ Passavant did become friendly with the others. Later that summer Bredin closes a letter to Ballanche (in which he discusses Ballanche's thought in relation to Boehme and others) with the words: "Adieu mon bon ami, j'embrasse Passavant, Ampère, Dugas".⁵⁵

If Ballanche was cautious around people like the comtesse d'Hautefeuille, he loved to discuss esotericism with friends whom he knew shared his interest, in particular Charles Nodier, Senancour, and Ferdinand Denis. From the 1820s, Nodier (1780–1844), as editor of the *Muse française* and host of an important salon at the Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal, was an important figure in French Romanticism. Ballanche's acquaintance with Nodier dates from the latter's praise of *Antigone* in the *Journal des Débats* in 1816, though Sainte-Beuve recalled that Nodier admired Ballanche as far back as 1803. Nodier also reviewed *Institutions sociales* in the *Journal des Débats* in 1818 (Ballanche replies to Nodier's gentle critique in the preface to *Institutions sociales* added for the *Oeuvres* edition of 1830). By the early 1820s the two had become close friends.⁵⁶ The friendship is not surprising; the two men shared numerous intellectual passions. Nodier, despite a strong element of ironic scepticism, was fascinated by all exotic or obscure teachings; he studied Illuminism, esoteric theories of language, the philosophies and religions of India, natural history, vampirism, superstitions, demonology, and much else.⁵⁷ While Nodier and Ballanche clearly had much to discuss, their mutual admiration should not obscure the fact that their thought and work is quite distinct. In particular, Nodier's

⁵³ Bredin to Ballanche, 29 April 1821, in Bredin, *Correspondance philosophique et littéraire avec Ballanche*, 136. Passavant's work in question is *Untersuchungen über den Lebensmagnetismus und das hellischen* (1821).

⁵⁴ But see Jung-Stilling's account of Ballanche's magnetic experiences in *Theorie der Geisterkunde* (1807).

⁵⁵ Bredin to Ballanche, 12 July 1821, in Bredin, *Correspondance philosophique et littéraire avec Ballanche*, 153. Thus Ampère was deeply interested in animal magnetism (he was also a friend of Alexandre Bertrand) in the very years of the research into electro-magnetism on which his scientific fame rests.

⁵⁶ Léon Séché, *Le Cénacle de la "Muse française"* (Paris: Mercure de France, 1908), 258–259; Sainte-Beuve, *Portraits contemporains*, 2:12.

⁵⁷ On Nodier, see Paul Bénichou, *L'Ecole du désenchantement* (Paris: Gallimard, 1992), 37–98 and Viatte, *Les Sources occultes du romantisme*, 2:145–167.

Contes fantastiques and *La Fée aux miettes* (1832) depict a spiritual demi-monde utterly foreign to the wholesome Ballanche. Perhaps most importantly Nodier repudiated progress, especially social progress. Nodier had read Bonnet independently of Ballanche and worked out his own theory of palingenesis in which social factors are dismissed as irrelevant to the resurrection of the individual.⁵⁸ Such disagreements in no way clouded the admiration, nor the affection, of each for the other.

Another close friend with an enduring interest in esotericism was Senancour (1770–1846). Ballanche had greatly admired *Obermann* (1804), and sought out its author to exchange philosophical opinions with the intention of converting him from skepticism. In fact, over the decades of their friendship Senancour's religious beliefs did undergo considerable development. After the rationalistic attacks on theology and mystical enthusiasm of *Sur les générations actuelles* (1793) and *Rêveries sur la nature primitive de l'homme* (1799) and the saddened Stoicism of *Obermann*, Senancour arrived in later years at the tentative hope that humanity's religious aspirations did correspond in some way to transcendent truth. His explorations in this direction are contained in *Libres Méditations d'un solitaire inconnu*, first published in 1819 and extensively revised throughout the remaining decades of his life.⁵⁹ While Ballanche is certainly not solely or even chiefly responsible for Senancour's change of heart, he did encourage and guide his friend in their mutual interest in Illuminist, philosophical, and theological writers.

Ferdinand Denis (1798–1890), a traveller, bibliophile, and Director of the Bibliothèque Sainte-Geneviève in Paris, wrote a *Précis de l'histoire et tableau analytique et critique des Sciences occultes* (1830). Without belonging to any one school, Denis drew on Swedenborg, Fabre d'Olivet, the Kabbalah, and Rosicrucianism in presenting a vision of the cosmos in which human beings interact with celestial intelligences and elemental spirits such as sylphs (air), salamanders (fire), undines (water), and gnomes (earth).⁶⁰

⁵⁸ Charles Nodier, "De la palingénésie humaine et de la résurrection" in *Revue de Paris* 14 (1832): 81–107. According to Raymond Schwab, Nodier wrote this piece during the cholera epidemic and in the belief that he himself was dying. Schwab, *The Oriental Renaissance*, trans. Gene Patterson-Black and Victor Reinking (New York: Columbia UP, 1984), 232. Nodier's article drew a gentle pro-Ballanche rejoinder from Honoré de Balzac: "Lettre à M. Ch. Nodier" in *Revue de Paris* 15 (1832): 168–182.

⁵⁹ D. G. Charlton, "Religious and Political Thought" in *The French Romantics*, ed. D. G. Charlton, 2 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 1:41–43.

⁶⁰ Viatte, *Les Sources occultes du romantisme*, 2:144.

Joseph Buche claimed to have discovered, in a green notebook among Ballanche's papers at the Bibliothèque Municipale de Lyon, a statement in Ballanche's handwriting concerning the relation of *Palin-génésie sociale* to the Esoteric tradition:

J'en ai écarté [de la *Palin-génésie sociale*] l'exposition théosophique . . . l'astrologie . . . et à plus forte raison tout ce qui pouvait rappeler le souvenir des systèmes obscurs fondés sur l'harmonie et la puissance des nombres, choses si considérables dans la plupart des philosophies anciennes. . . . J'en écarté toute allusion aux sciences occultes, le magisme, l'hermétisme, la cabale. Je me suis abstenu des traditions mosaïques. Quelques personnes auraient été scandalisées de voir ces traditions confondues parmi les autres . . . ; au reste l'anathème n'en sera pas moins porté et n'en sera pas moins injuste.⁶¹

Here Ballanche clearly states that it is only fear of offending the orthodox that keeps him from openly declaring his allegiance to a wide range of esoteric traditions. While I have not been able to find the fragment quoted by Buche among Ballanche's papers in Lyon, Ballanche similarly remarks in *Ville des Expiations* that he is omitting from his account of the primitive faculties of humanity "les sciences occultes, qui ne furent pas toujours des jongleries".⁶²

Ballanche, we may conclude, was thoroughly familiar with Illuminism. Nevertheless, he was not, properly speaking, an Illuminist: he never claimed to have experienced interior illuminations permitting him to penetrate the divine understanding;⁶³ he did not become a disciple of Boehme, as it is fair to say Bredin did; and he was not initiated into any Illuminist society. Ballanche, moreover, seems less confident than the Illuminists that we can truly know the spiritual world: "[L]e monde des esprits nous est trop inconnu; seulement il ne nous est point permis de douter que ce ne soit lui qui gouverne le monde des corps".⁶⁴ It is a question of historical understanding versus inspired vision. In a letter discussing *Orphée*, in which he observes that this work reaches as far back into the night of origins as is possible through historical analysis of myths (see Chapter Twelve), Ballanche observes that the direct illumination of the Illuminists might be able to reach back still farther: "Jacob Böhme et Saint-Martin se

⁶¹ Buche, *L'Ecole mystique de Lyon*, 15–16.

⁶² *VE*, 30.

⁶³ Derré, "Lumières, Illuminisme chrétien et pensée mystique dans la *Ville des Expiations*", 242.

⁶⁴ *VE*, 105

sont enfoncés dans les profondeurs de cet horizon. Je suis resté en deça. Cela tient à ce que je suis seulement historien”.⁶⁵ Ballanche here offers a rare view of himself vis-à-vis Boehme and Saint-Martin. He does not deny the possibility of theosophical knowledge, but restricts himself in *his works* to what he considers to be historically demonstrable. In 1847, mere months before his death, Ballanche proposed to add a new book to the *Orphée* in order to discuss the “science hiératique” and the esoteric meaning of the book of Genesis.⁶⁶ By *science hiératique* Ballanche means the interpretation of the divine signs embedded in nature and human language. Essentially, *Palingénésie sociale* is an application of the *science hiératique* to history, rather than to nature and language (his numerous passages on *parole* notwithstanding).

Illuminist themes in Palingénésie sociale

Having introduced Illuminism and demonstrated Ballanche’s familiarity with this current of thought, this section examines Illuminist themes within *Palingénésie sociale*. Ballanche’s cosmos is the cosmos of the Illuminists: “Le monde matériel est un emblème, un hiéroglyph du monde spirituel”.⁶⁷ Because the material universe both veils the underlying spiritual reality and is a symbolic reproduction of it, everything in the universe is a “voile à soulever, symbole à deviner”.⁶⁸ While admitting, however, the correspondence of the microcosm to the macrocosm, Ballanche scorns theurgy: “Hébal ne cherches point ces théurgies, ces sciences magiques et superstitieuses qui, à la fin d’un cycle religieux, essaient de se substituer à la foi”.⁶⁹ In excluding theurgy from true religion, Ballanche allies himself with both Charles Bonnet and Saint-Martin. Bonnet argued that, owing to the corrosive effects on traditional beliefs of eighteenth-century rationalism, superstition was replacing faith,⁷⁰ while in *Ecce Homo* (1792) Saint-Martin set himself against the neo-theurgy of Martinès de Pasqually and the various

⁶⁵ Ballanche to La Tour du Pin, 22 June 1829, in Charles Huit, *La Vie et les Oeuvres de Ballanche* (Lyon: Vitte, 1904), 198.

⁶⁶ Ballanche to Hautefeuille, 11 March 1847, in Marquiset, *Ballanche et Madame d’Hautefeuille*, 254–255.

⁶⁷ *OC*, 4:212. See also *OC*, 6:125.

⁶⁸ *OC*, 2:71; cf. 6:296.

⁶⁹ *VH*, 226. See also *VH*, 200, where Ballanche declares that Christianity eclipses theurgy.

⁷⁰ Buche, *L’Ecole mystique de Lyon*, 20.

obediences of Illuminé masonry. While the doctrine correspondences is fundamental to the nature of the universe in which social evolution operates, the correspondences that matter to Ballanche's philosophy of history are historical analogies (see Chapter Twelve).⁷¹ Much more important here are the themes of the identity of the fall and rehabilitation, initiation, and magnetism.

Identity of the Fall and rehabilitation

Ballanche's fundamental doctrine of the identity of the Fall and rehabilitation is grounded on his interpretation of the Fall:

Pour bien apprécier le dogme de la déchéance, il faut se le représenter comme la conquête de la conscience et de la responsabilité humaine. . . . Ainsi, la responsabilité étant une promotion, et la faute étant une suite de l'acquisition de la faculté du bien et du mal, il était inévitable que la réhabilitation fût identique à la chute (*OC*, 4:79–80).

Ballanche posits, prior to all history, a universal, or cosmogonic, man (not the historical cosmogonic people of the Titanic age). Primordial or Universal Adam, the Adam Kadmon of the Esoteric Tradition, contained within himself the sum of all generations and bore the likeness to God referred to in Genesis 1:27.⁷² The Fall, as the origin of evil, resulted from the fundamental human will to independence: "[l'essence humaine] est apparue avec la faculté de vouloir immédiatement se détacher de la vie universelle pour vivre de sa vie propre".⁷³ Ballanche is adamant that God intended humanity as a free moral being and that he wanted humanity to exercise its liberty.⁷⁴ Indeed, in Ballanche's account the Fall is almost part of the divine economy: "L'origine du mal, c'est la nécessité de la liberté, pour que l'homme fût, selon son essence, un être moral".⁷⁵ The human will was intended to co-operate with divine will; that is, the Fall was neither predestined nor necessary. The *épreuve* symbolized by the forbidden tree was a test of primordial Adam's will. Adam succumbed to the *épreuve*, hence the Fall. Adam's act does not mean, however,

⁷¹ "Toujours les analogies se présentent à mon esprit". *OC*, 4:240.

⁷² In *VH*, 141, Ballanche glosses "in the likeness of God" as "capable of understanding the laws governing the universe". Busst links this interpretation to Augustine and Origen.

⁷³ *OC*, 6:175.

⁷⁴ *OC*, 4:120.

⁷⁵ *VE*, 16.

that humanity is forever condemned, only that it must undergo rehabilitation, while retaining the faculty of self-awareness (the knowledge of good and evil) achieved in the very act that caused its Fall.

The Fall shattered the unity of primordial Adam by casting him into the world of time and space; into, that is, a process of succession and division that sundered the original unity into a multiplicity of individuals and generations.⁷⁶ The Fall produced both sexual and social division. Sexual division, by establishing reproduction, dispersed the evil of the Fall by diluting it in the multiplicity of human generations.⁷⁷ By entering into time, humanity is able to expiate its sin over countless generations. Sexual division will be overcome at the end of humanity's terrestrial existence as part of the general closure of history, at which time humanity will reacquire its pre-lapsarian androgynous nature.⁷⁸ Though of great importance cosmogonically, sexual division plays only a minor role in the historical rehabilitation of humanity. While the male principle initiates the female principle, just as the Orient initiates the West and patricians initiate plebeians, for all but the culmination of the terrestrial phase of rehabilitation sexual division merely symbolizes the fundamental social division into initiators and initiateables that governs history by the operation of social evolution. The contemporary struggle for the emancipation of women, which Ballanche supports,⁷⁹ is a consequence of French society having reached an advanced stage of social evolution rather than a motive force of social evolution itself.⁸⁰ Ballanche's theory of *peuples-femmes*, which he adapted and generalized from Vico (*New Science*, § 78), is similarly based on a distinction between initiators and initiateables, rather than between literal men and women.⁸¹ It

⁷⁶ *OC*, 4:354, 137. See also *VH*, 143.

⁷⁷ *VE*, 112. Ballanche found this notion in Fabre d'Olivet, *Cain. mystère dramatique de lord Byron* (Paris: 1823; reprint Genève: Slatkine, 1981), 196–197. See also Busst, *VH*, 18–19.

⁷⁸ See A. J. L. Busst, "The Image of the Androgyne in the Nineteenth Century" in *Romantic Mythologies*, ed. Ian Fletcher (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1967), 19–23. See also Kari Weil, *Androgyny and the Denial of Difference* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1992), 68–71.

⁷⁹ Ballanche's "feminism" was an important aspect of his fame after 1830. It also produced the curious episode of Sophie Mazure, a young woman who, having fallen in love with the man whose ideas she considered the foundation for the emancipation of women, attached herself to him for a few turbulent months in 1830. The episode bewildered Ballanche and amused the Abbaye-aux-Bois circle. On Sophie Mazure, see Kettler, *Lettres de Ballanche à Madame Récamier*, 172–177.

⁸⁰ *OC*, 6:176, 266. See also *VH*, 137.

⁸¹ See *OC*, 4:393–394; 5:45, 74, 253.

is, in Ballanche's view, the social division into initiateables and initiators that is fundamental because social evolution operates by means of class distinctions: "la faute avait fait l'institution des classes; et la rédemption, qui est contemporaine de la faute, produit l'initiation des classes, l'une par les autres".⁸² Humanity, in short, "est divisé pour être expié".⁸³ Similarly, though the Fall imprisoned humanity in the material world, imprisonment in matter, besides being expiatory, also helps to prevent further abuse of free will by restricting the scope of its operation. In this respect, imprisonment in matter parallels the imposition on humanity of society and social institutions: both are restrictions placed on the free exercise of human will in order to prevent its further abuse and permit its rehabilitation.⁸⁴

The Fall transformed primordial Adam into evolutionary humanity. Because social evolution is the means by which the lost unity of humanity will be restored, and because social evolution operates by means of successive initiation, or the acquisition of responsibility by all humanity, Ballanche can declare that social evolution operates by means of the very responsibility acquired at the Fall. Ballanche's doctrine of the identity of the Fall and rehabilitation signifies that the means of overcoming the consequences of the Fall were produced in the Fall itself: "Ainsi le dogme générateur de la déchéance et de la réhabilitation produit la loi perpétuelle de l'évolution et du progrès. Ainsi l'évolution et le progrès sont dans la nature de l'homme déchu et réhabilité".⁸⁵ Ballanche's doctrine of the identity of the Fall and rehabilitation of humanity is key to understanding the operation of social evolution in *Palingénésie sociale*: "Le point de départ de la perfectibilité, c'est le dogme de la déchéance et de la réhabilitation, comme ce même dogme est la raison des initiations progressives, chaque initiation à la condition de l'épreuve, et l'épreuve toujours sous forme d'expiation".⁸⁶ Again and again, Ballanche insists on the importance of this identity: "Rappelons ici qu'il ne faut jamais perdre de vue le dogme un et identique de la déchéance et de la réhabilitation, sans lequel il est impossible d'expliquer la série et l'ensemble des destinées humaines".⁸⁷ The philosophy of history of *Palingénésie*

⁸² *OC*, 6:268.

⁸³ *OC*, 4:80.

⁸⁴ See Busst, *VH*, 17.

⁸⁵ *OC*, 3:357.

⁸⁶ *OC*, 4:387.

⁸⁷ *OC*, 4:123.

sociale, in short, is built on the Illuminist doctrine of the identity of the Fall and rehabilitation. This doctrine is homologous with the preformationism of the theory of palingenesis Ballanche adapted from Bonnet: the germ of the true human essence present from the beginning corresponds to the means of rehabilitation already contained in the Fall. For Ballanche, as for the Illuminists, the Fall did not fundamentally change human nature; rehabilitation, consequently, requires not an ontological change in essence from sinner to redeemed, but rather a gradual reorientation of the will via successive initiation.

Although Ballanche clearly states that the Fall was caused by the exercise of free will, he maintains that the exact nature of the Fall as a spiritual event under God's dominion is unknowable, at least in the present existence. Perhaps, he suggests, humanity will learn these spiritual mysteries when its rehabilitation has been fully accomplished.⁸⁸ In fact, Ballanche is not really interested in the nature of the Fall in itself. It is, rather, the identification of the Fall and rehabilitation that is important because Ballanche thereby accounts for the dolorous human condition while exculpating God of any responsibility for suffering. This world is a place of suffering because it is a fallen world; yet, it is through suffering that humanity passes through the stages of initiation and thereby rehabilitates itself:

Et l'épreuve et l'initiation, redoutable témoignage du dogme primitif, n'étaient qu'un tissu de longues, d'interminables calamités: sans l'histoire qui précède toute chronologie, comment Hébal eût-il connu la raison de tant de fléaux, de tant de malheurs, de la guerre, de l'esclavage, de la division des classes et des castes, de l'angoisse, de la mort (VH, 148)?

Cosmogony, or spiritual pre-history, explains history; the identity of the Fall and rehabilitation makes intelligible (and morally acceptable) the interminable suffering that is history. As Bowman observes, a theodicy is contained within the structure of initiation.⁸⁹

Jean Richer has claimed that Ballanche's *Orphée* depicts Prometheus as inaugurating the mode of revolt against an unjust god.⁹⁰ Richer's formulation is misleading; Ballanche explicitly rejects the interpretation

⁸⁸ OC, 6:178. The ultimate origin of evil is similarly unknowable. OC, 6:150, 177. Jacques Roos has collected Ballanche's texts pertaining to the Fall in *Aspects littéraires du mysticisme philosophique*, 381–387.

⁸⁹ Bowman, "Illuminism, utopia, mythology", 84.

⁹⁰ Richer, "Romantic Myths of the Rebel and the Victim" in Yves Bonnefoy and Wendy Doniger, eds. *Mythologies*, 2 volumes (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), 2:769.

of Prometheus as a figure of revolt. Prometheus, at one level, represents plebeianism, or humanity making itself. His Titanic nature indicates that he belongs to the earliest stage in human social evolution, and as such he embodies the struggle against nature of the cosmogonic age. Prometheus' significance, however, goes well beyond figuring the first stage of social evolution because his theft of fire symbolizes the acquisition by humanity of the capacity of good and evil, or the moral responsibility on which the progressive rehabilitation of the human race is based. The true meaning of the myth of Prometheus is that it symbolizes the problem of the origin of good and evil, the mysterious dogma by which it is revealed that responsibility is a promotion. The myth of Prometheus, then, is a veiled version of Ballanche's basic doctrine of the identity of the Fall and rehabilitation. In this respect, Prometheus is the necessary forerunner of Orpheus; just as responsibility is the necessary prerequisite of social evolution, so Orpheus' civilizing mission presupposes the acquisition of responsibility. Together, Prometheus and Orpheus represent the overcoming of the consequences of the Fall. Ballanche points to the twin statues of Prometheus and Orpheus, "ces deux emblèmes de l'émancipation", that stood at Rome from earliest times as a cipher of the providential mission of Rome.⁹¹ Ballanche's occasional association of Bonaparte with Prometheus adds to the confusion over the Promethean nature. Bonaparte, a modern Titan, was, like the ancient Titan, chained on a rock. Prometheus, however, as an agent of civilization and embodiment of emancipation, was chained for being in advance of his time, whereas Bonaparte, the enemy of civilization and embodiment of regression, was chained for being behind his time.⁹² Ballanche's condemnation of Byron as Promethean similarly refers to what Ballanche believed to be the socially regressive consequences of his poetry.⁹³ Ballanche observes in "Première Addition aux *Prolégomènes*" that a proper understanding of the Prometheus myth would refute Byron.⁹⁴

⁹¹ *OC*, 6:96–106, 166–167, 271. See also 4:120–121 and 5:34.

⁹² *OC*, 4:275–276. See also *VH*, 222.

⁹³ See Arthur McCalla, "Byron and Ballanche's Historical Theodicy" in *Nineteenth-Century French Studies* 22 (1994): 379–390.

⁹⁴ *OC*, 5:34.

Initiation

The term *initiation* occurs here and there in *Institutions sociales* but does not carry the full weight of social evolution. In *Palingénésie sociale*, however, social evolution operates by means of initiation. Bowman has said, speaking about French Romanticism generally, that “[i]nitiation involves acquiring new knowledge by undergoing suffering and pain”⁹⁵ I shall discuss the three terms of this definition (knowledge, acquisition, and suffering), as they apply to Ballanche’s social evolutionary initiation.

Initiation, for Ballanche, comprises the knowledge that the purpose of social life is the spiritual end of overcoming the effects of the Fall. Those in a given society who understand this are the initiators; those who do not are the initiateables. At first, in the cosmogonic age, only isolated sages like Orpheus understood the rehabilitatory function of social life. The patrician age is so named because it marks the accession of the patrician class to this knowledge. History thenceforth chronicles the plebeians’ slow acquisition of social responsibility and self-awareness. When the entire human race possesses this knowledge, the initiation of humanity will be complete and social evolution will have accomplished its purpose. Knowledge of the rehabilitatory function of society is acquired through its transmission from those who possess it already. The anonymous sages of the cosmogonic age, symbolically represented by Orpheus, effected the transition from the cosmogonic age to the patrician age by establishing the institutions of religion, marriage, and burial and communicating the general traditions of humanity. The relative few who were capable of understanding their teaching became the patricians of the new age, while the remainder formed the mass of plebeians. The patrician age, in turn, yields to the plebeian age when the patricians, usually under compulsion, have transmitted to the plebeians the sum of their social knowledge. The third element of Bowman’s definition acquits Ballanche of the charge of gnosticism: initiateables must merit their successive initiation through suffering. Orpheus knew that the transition to civilization would be painful for those whom he wished to help because he understood that the social state was not intended to be one of tranquil repose, but of expiation. Echoing *Institutions sociales*,

⁹⁵ Bowman, “Illuminism, utopia, mythology”, 84.

he declares suffering to be both inseparable from progress and the means used by providence to improve humanity: "ce n'est pas le bonheur que j'apporte aux hommes, c'est la puissance du progrès".⁹⁶ Society, with its division into initiators and initiateables, has been imposed on humanity as an arena for expiation. Ballanche notes that the traditions according to which all primitive cities were founded by murderers, just as Cain, the first murderer, founded the first city, symbolically express the fundamental doctrine that the basis of society is the need for expiation.

The distinction between initiation and expiation is really only one of perspective: from the point of view of the Fall, humanity's guilt is overcome by expiation; from the point of view of rehabilitation, humanity is reintegrated by initiation. Initiation and expiation are different ways of looking at the same process: initiation will be complete when expiation has been exhausted. In the end, initiation is, as Bowman observes, identical to expiation.⁹⁷ In comparison with *Institutions sociales*, Ballanche's assimilation in *Palingénésie sociale* of expiation to the Illuminist language of initiation enables him to merge expiation and progress in a unified conception of social evolution. The march of social evolution that is the sum of countless initiations operates by means of expiation.

The advent of Christianity modified but did not replace the role of initiation in social evolution. In pre-Christian times, Ballanche declares, the act of initiation was always followed by the murder of the initiator by the initiate, as symbolized by the serf-priests of Arician Diana (J. G. Frazer's priests of Nemi), among whom it was the custom that whomever could kill the current priest succeeded to his office and held it until he in turn was killed by a challenger. Such progress by violence clearly recalls the death of kings as the mechanism of social change in the pre-Christian world in *Institutions sociales*. As in the 1818 work, the advent of Christianity abrogates the law of violence. Social evolution continues to operate by means of initiation, but initiation through cooperation. Similarly, by establishing a single moral law and a universal confraternity of worship, Christianity abolishes the law of castes constitutive of the patrician age whereby initiators and initiateables were held to be of different natures.⁹⁸ No

⁹⁶ *OC*, 5:251. See also 5:261.

⁹⁷ Bowman, "Illuminism, utopia, and mythology", 85.

⁹⁸ *OC*, 4:65.

longer could plebeians be excluded from the civil and religious life of states, as at the Thebes of *Orphée* or the early Rome of *Formule générale*, on the grounds that they were inferior in essence to the patricians. Christianity is "l'initiation devenue générale et populaire".⁹⁹ Ballanche regrets that many mythologies and philosophies, including some Christian ones, have perpetuated the obsolete notion that initiators and initiateables represent an ontological distinction between guilty and innocent souls.¹⁰⁰ The locus classicus for this error is Bk. XV of Augustine's *City of God*, wherein the human race is divided into two great families, that of Abel and that of Cain. Ballanche explicitly rejects the division of humanity into two ontologically distinct families, one guilty and one innocent. He insists that all humanity was implicated in the Fall, that the division into initiators and initiateables is simply an interim division of faculties necessary for the operation of social evolution, and that the unfolding of social evolution itself progressively effaces the division.¹⁰¹

In the ancient world patricians kept initiation a closely guarded secret, protected, under the veil of the "patrician mysteries", by oaths and the death sentence for transgression.¹⁰² The advent of Christianity annulled the condition of secrecy because, as a corollary to its single moral fraternity, it openly promulgated the path of rehabilitation. Similarly, since all people are now religiously equal, there are no profane classes to whom the social mysteries are forbidden. As the Christian law of religious equality extends further and further into civil society, class distinctions gradually disappear. Social evolution, which began in bitter class struggle, will eventually culminate in a classless society as all humanity attains full initiation. Hence, by means of "la loi générale, perpétuelle, miséricordieuse de l'initiation",¹⁰³ the divisions caused by the Fall will be overcome, primordial Adam reintegrated, and humanity rehabilitated. The culmination of social evolution, however, by no means represents the end of the rehabilitatory process. Just as the palingenetic chain extends into the celestial hierarchies, so Ballanche is sure that God has further courses of expiation in reserve for humanity once it has completed its social evolution on earth.¹⁰⁴

⁹⁹ *OC*, 4:115.

¹⁰⁰ *OC*, 5:10-11.

¹⁰¹ *VE*, 101.

¹⁰² *OC*, 4:156.

¹⁰³ *OC*, 4:366.

¹⁰⁴ *OC*, 4:367.

The unfolding of social evolution based on the primordial division into initiateables and initiators is the history of the West. In the Orient, however, social evolution has been subverted by a false conception of initiation: “il faut savoir qu’une partie de la race humaine n’a pu parvenir à se distinguer de la vie universelle”.¹⁰⁵ The sacred books of India depict the goal of religion to be the absorption of the self into the universal life, which Ballanche calls the highest form of pantheism.¹⁰⁶ The form initiation has taken in India—the annihilation of the self in the Absolute—blocks social evolution because social evolution is nothing other than the successive acquisition and exercise of self-awareness and responsibility, whereas absorption into the universal life is precisely the loss of self-awareness and responsibility.¹⁰⁷ Ballanche’s criticisms of Indian religion are similar to, and may be appropriations of, those of Friedrich Schlegel. Schlegel had begun his studies of Indian literature and philosophy as an enthusiastic participant in the German Romantic embrace of India. As he acquired a competent knowledge of Sanskrit, something very rare among Romantic Indophiles, and began to study texts in detail, he repudiated the vision of India as the source and sustainer of a pure spirituality. He was particularly troubled by the moral consequences of Indian pantheism, which in his view lead to fatalism and the annihilation of the self.¹⁰⁸ Schlegel first voiced his reservations in *Critique of Philosophical Systems* (1804–1806), and expanded them in a work familiar to Ballanche, *On the Language and Wisdom of India* (1808). Ballanche was no doubt also aware that orthodox Catholics in France had made the accusation of pantheism one of the standard charges against the German Romantics.¹⁰⁹

Aspects of the interrelated stories from *Orphée* and *Formule générale* of Orpheus, Eurydice, Erigone, and Virginia illustrate the nature of initiation within the social evolutionary framework of *Palingénésie sociale*.

We first meet Orpheus when, in Book II of *Orphée*, the Titan Talaon

¹⁰⁵ OC, 6:176.

¹⁰⁶ OC, 6:119. Ballanche almost certainly did not distinguish between Buddhist *nirvana* and the Hindu dissolution of *atman* into *Atman*. Buddhism was widely thought to be the primitive form of Hinduism until the work of Eugène Burnouf began to clarify the early history of Buddhism.

¹⁰⁷ OC, 6:119–120. Ballanche brings the same charge of annihilating the moral self in pantheism against Maistre in Book II of *Ville des Expiations*.

¹⁰⁸ Burton Feldman and Robert Richardson, *The Rise of Modern Mythology, 1680–1860* (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1972), 351–352.

¹⁰⁹ See Juden, *Traditions orphiques et tendances mystiques*, 234.

and his daughter Eurydice rescue a sailor in trouble out on the sea. Talaon sets fire to a majestic oak as a beacon for the unknown person, who, after safely reaching shore, introduces himself as Orpheus, a young hero who has survived a shipwreck.¹¹⁰ In this manner Orpheus, the representative of the future, meets Talaon, the representative of the dying order of the cosmogonic age, for the struggle against the elements is drawing to a close and the patrician age of struggle among human faculties is dawning.¹¹¹ Talaon's immolation of the oak symbolizes the historical drama about to be played out, for the oak was no ordinary tree but, like the oak of Dodona, a sacred oracle, in whose leaves the whistling of the wind transmitted the will of the gods. In ages of crisis divine as well as human dynasties change, so just as Talaon represents an expiring order so too his gods are condemned and their oracles fall silent.¹¹² The burning of the oracle-tree in order to rescue Orpheus is a figure of Ballanche's fundamental doctrine that the death of an obsolete order assists the birth of the succeeding order.

Eurydice falls in love with Orpheus and is betrothed to him. Talaon, the last of the Titans, initiates Orpheus into the religious and social mysteries.¹¹³ Thus prepared, Orpheus and Eurydice travel to Samothrace, where they begin the task of civilizing brutish cosmogonic natures. Ballanche insists that it is the combination of Orpheus and Eurydice that awakens the latent humanity of the Samothracians: Orpheus teaches them religion and social institutions, while Eurydice introduces the sentiments of beauty and chaste love.¹¹⁴ Eurydice is impatient to get married and Orpheus decides that since they have made the Samothracians a beacon of civilization to all cosmogonic peoples there is no need to travel any farther themselves; they will settle down together in Samothrace. Immediately, Orpheus is filled with foreboding, and Eurydice realizes that she is dying. Her last words acknowledge that her death is a punishment from the gods for

¹¹⁰ *OC*, 5:143.

¹¹¹ *OC*, 5:136.

¹¹² Talaon himself, however, recognized the coming of a new age and changed his nature. He learned the law of the new age from the sages of India. *OC*, 5:169–170.

¹¹³ *OC*, 5:175–176. "J'ai voulu que Talaon fût l'anneau de la tradition d'un révolution primitive, qui plus tard devait être déposée dans les Mystères." *OC*, 5:27.

¹¹⁴ *OC*, 5:137, 193–194. Was this the passage that inspired Edgar Quinet's description of *Orphée* as Ballanche's "amour pour madame Récamier transporté parmi les Titans et les Cyclopes de Samothrace"? *Edgar Quinet: Lettres à sa mère*, ed. George Saintsbury (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1885), 69.

having distracted Orpheus from his civilizing mission to the barbarous peoples. After urging him to obey his calling and forget about her (cf. the injunction to Orpheus in the normative myth not to look back at Eurydice as they leave the Underworld), she dies.¹¹⁵ Eurydice's death is for Orpheus an "*initiation douloureuse*" that teaches him about immortality and about the meaning of his mission. Among the Samothracians, it establishes the fundamentals of the Orphic religion.¹¹⁶

As the daughter of a Titan, Eurydice belongs to the expiring order of things. Despite her contribution to civilizing the Samothracians she is unable to comprehend the demands of the dawning age. She presumes to place love ahead of the task of initiation, and pays for her presumption with her life. The tragedy of Eurydice is the tragedy of all palinogenetic ages: the old order must die so that the new one can be born. Once again, the immense distance Ballanche has traversed since his early writings is apparent. In the "Sixième Fragment" the story of Orpheus and Eurydice served only to illustrate the universality of sorrow. In his detailed analysis of the Eurydice episode, A. J. L. Busst concludes that 1) Orpheus was unable to contract a marriage because he lacked full patrician rights; and 2) Eurydice's desire for marriage constituted an attempt at a degree of initiation not open to her; hence, her death represents an unaccomplished initiation of the lower classes.¹¹⁷ I accept Busst's conclusion as regards Orpheus, but insist that Eurydice, as a Titan's daughter and not a *plébéienne*, represents an obsolete past, not a premature future.

Orpheus leaves Samothrace shortly after Eurydice's funeral to continue his civilizing mission in Thrace. He teaches the Thracians agriculture and founds the civilizing institutions of religion, marriage, and burial. He does not, however, divide the Thracians into patricians and plebeians; he leaves them an undifferentiated mass because he is unable to establish distinctions among a multitude equal in ignorance. Though Thrace is emerging from the cosmogonic age, it lacks the basic binary structure of the patrician age such as Amphion imposed on Thebes. Deprived of a class of initiators, social evolution

¹¹⁵ OC, 5:220–225.

¹¹⁶ OC, 5:228–229. Ballanche most likely drew on Jean Terrasson's *Sethos* (1731) here. Juden sums up the effect of Eurydice's death in Terrasson's version of the myth: "Au lieu d'entraîner la mort d'Orphée, la perte d'Eurydice ouvre maintenant la carrière du chantre, le confirme dans sa vocation d'initié, et le lance dans sa mission". Juden, *Traditions orphiques et tendances mystiques*, 129.

¹¹⁷ Busst, "The Message of Ballanche's *Orphée*" in *Romance Studies* 10 (1987): 21–33.

is inoperative; hence the proverbial backwardness of Thrace.¹¹⁸ Thrace is not an anticipation of classless society, the ultimate goal of social evolution, but a pre-class stage, a frozen moment in the transition from the brutishness of the cosmogonic age to the patrician-dominated societies of the heroic age.

Orpheus' inability to establish the binary social structure of the patrician age in Thrace is linked to his special nature. Orpheus is not simply an institutor of the patrician age, for he senses that absolute equality is the ultimate goal of social evolution. Talaon once asked him if he, a hero, wants to become a plebeian. Orpheus replied that he does not want to become a plebeian; he wants to be "un héros initiateur, revêtu d'un sacerdoce miséricordieux et progressif".¹¹⁹ A. J. George identifies Orpheus as a plebeian;¹²⁰ but, while Orpheus' sympathies do align him with the plebeians, according to Ballanche's initiatory schema only someone from a higher class can initiate someone from a lower class. If he was to initiate the plebeians, then, Orpheus could not himself have been a plebeian. He had to be a hero, a patrician, though one who saw beyond his caste and who placed human solidarity above class loyalty; in sum, a "merciful and progressive hero". Ballanche himself describes Orpheus as a *hero*, which is a synonym for patrician given that heroic age is the alternative name for the patrician age. Nevertheless, Ballanche underlines Orpheus' liminal status by describing him as a new man, one who did not know his father's name.¹²¹ Since Ballanche considers knowledge of one's ancestry one of the distinguishing features of patricians vis-à-vis plebeians, this detail is significant. Orpheus is in some sense a plebeian hero. Indeed, Ballanche explains that he has made Orpheus *diphye*; that is, of a double nature. Orpheus is a plebeian in spirit, for only a plebeian is able to empathize with humanity as a whole: "La vérité est que les sympathies d'humanité générale ne peuvent naître dans la classe patricienne, mais seulement dans la classe plébéienne."¹²²

Orpheus' double nature eases initiation, but it is not an essential attribute of initiators; in fact, it is more a foreshadowing of Christian,

¹¹⁸ OC, 5:257–258.

¹¹⁹ OC, 5:151.

¹²⁰ George, *Pierre-Simon Ballanche: Precursor of Romanticism* (Syracuse: Syracuse UP, 1945), 112.

¹²¹ OC, 5:153.

¹²² OC, 5:58. See also "Les Mémoires de M. de Chateaubriand" in *Dossier sur la Ville des Expiations de Ballanche*, ed. J.-R. Derré (Paris: CNRS, 1981), 76.

bloodless initiation. In practice, and in accordance with the law of violence, most initiators in the ancient world initiate only grudgingly or under compulsion. Moreover, Orpheus is too early; the time has not come to found the plebeian age. What Thrace requires is the establishment of the class distinctions by which social evolution operates in the patrician age. Orpheus' inability, however, to accomplish in Thrace what Amphion accomplished at Thebes protects him from having to die at the hands of those whom he has initiated into the mysteries of social life. There are thus two imperfectly integrated aspects to Orpheus: the sage who terminates the cosmogonic age by transmitting the civilizing institutions, and the visionary who glimpses the end of social evolution in absolute equality (cf. his vision in Book IX). Initiators must move with their times, yet not be too far ahead. Orpheus foresees the distant future when what the present moment of social evolution requires is the establishment of binary social order of the patrician age. In a sense, Orpheus skips over the patrician age altogether; his vision, like Hébal's, elides history, whereas social evolution must be played out, slowly and painfully, in history.

During Orpheus' sojourn in Thrace a maenad named Erigone falls in love with him. Erigone, who obscurely senses the existence of something higher, is unhappy with the ecstatic cult of the maenads; she is drawn to Orpheus, whose songs resonate with her inchoate yearnings. Erigone believes that she can raise herself to Orpheus' level, and dreams of replacing Eurydice as his helpmeet. She asks him to teach her the mysteries of his lyre and to make her his equal. Orpheus replies that each person receives from the gods a mission to fulfil; it has not been given to him to experience the joys of love but to civilize humanity. Erigone apparently accepts that she cannot have Orpheus, and again asks him to teach her to play the lyre. Orpheus agrees to teach her music, but not the laws of social order contained in the two extra strings that make his lyre the *lyre civilisatrice*. Erigone progresses well until one day she tries to sound the strings that correspond to the laws of society; the strings break.¹²³

Ballanche derived the identification of the constitutive laws of society with the strings of Orpheus' lyre from Vico. In the *New Science*, Vico argues that the force that compelled the *bestioni* to submit to the civilizing institutions was expressed, in the absence of abstract thought, as a cord:

¹²³ OC, 5:305–322.

Such and so much divine force was needed to reduce these giants, as wild as they were gross, to human duties. Since they were unable to express this force abstractly, they represented it in concrete physical form as a cord, called *chorda* in Greek and in Latin at first *fides*, whose original and proper meaning appears in the phrase *fides deorum*, force of the gods. From this cord (for the lyre must have begun with the monochord) they fashioned the lyre of Orpheus, to the accompaniment of which, singing to them the force of the gods in the auspices, he tamed the beasts of Greece to humanity.¹²⁴

The lyre of Orpheus symbolizes for Vico the religious force that terminated the divine age by establishing the social laws and institutions that made human beings out of the *bestioni*, thereby founding the heroic age. For this reason, he says, the poets of the heroic age used the phrase *lyra regnorum*, or "lyre of the kingdoms", to express the law of the heroic age.¹²⁵ Ballanche adopts Vico's equation outright: "Les cordes de la lyre sont les lois religieuses et civiles".¹²⁶ Breaking a string is breaking a law, or, in the language of initiation, attempting to receive instruction beyond one's capacities. When Erigone breaks the string, she realizes that she has presumed too much; her love has drawn her into a struggle that is beyond her capacities because her profane nature excludes her from initiation into the social mysteries. Orpheus realizes that he should have removed the two extra strings, which were intended for himself alone. He should have known that she lacked the capacity for good and evil, that insurmountable barrier that separates those worthy of initiation from those unworthy.¹²⁷

Erigone soon goes mad over her unrequited love for Orpheus and having been repulsed forever from the high sphere to which she wanted to raise herself with him. In this state, she steadily weakens and dies. Erigone's sister maenads swear revenge on Orpheus for her death. Providence, however, does not permit the execution of their revenge, and a substitute is killed in Orpheus' place. Orpheus would have died at the maenads' hands, Ballanche notes, in accordance with the law that an initiator must die at the hands of those whom he has initiated, *if* he had initiated them into the mysteries of

¹²⁴ Vico, *The New Science of Giambattista Vico*, trans. Thomas Bergin and Max Harold Fisch (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1988), § 523.

¹²⁵ Vico, *New Science*, § 615.

¹²⁶ *OC*, 4:164. See A. J. L. Busst, "Ballanche et le poète voyant" in *Romantisme* 4 (1972): 93-94.

¹²⁷ *OC*, 5:322-324.

the social order.¹²⁸ The Thracians' initiation, we recall, had not been complete, hence both their inability to progress and their immunity from having to kill Orpheus. Similarly, Ballanche depicts the maenads, Thracians in the original myth, as a sub-social horde (as indicated by their savage ritual of dismemberment), hence they could not kill Orpheus as they had not been initiated into social life. Haac's repeated assertion¹²⁹ that Orpheus died at the hands of the maenads reproduces the false, or ideological, view of the Roman patricians in *Formule générale*, for whom Orpheus' philo-plebeianism constituted a threat and who transformed the myth of Orpheus into a cautionary tale against would-be champions of the plebeians.¹³⁰ Ballanche presents the true account of the death of Orpheus in Book IX of *Orphée*.

Gaston Frainnet has noted that the love and death of Erigone recalls the episode of the druidess Velléda in Book X of Chateaubriand's *Les Martyrs*.¹³¹ The similarity between the episodes must not be exaggerated; Mario Praz could hardly have discussed Erigone, as he did Velléda, in the context of diabolic sensualism.¹³² What is important is to recognize how Ballanche incorporated his borrowing into his own system of initiation and social evolution. Whereas Velléda kills herself for having violated her Vestal vows, Erigone dies as a consequence of the laws of initiation. Two aspects of the nature of initiation in Ballanche's social evolutionary framework are entwined in Erigone's death. She was punished for having wanted to change the destiny of a man chosen by the gods for a mission (and so in a sense she did replay Eurydice's role). Yet, since maenads stand emblematically for plebeians,¹³³ Erigone's premature desire for initiation symbolizes the impossibility of historical classes anticipating initiation. Social evolution, as Ballanche explicitly notes in relation to Erigone, proceeds gradually; the historical process of expiation cannot be shortened.¹³⁴

¹²⁸ OC, 5:331–334.

¹²⁹ Ballanche, *La Théodicée et la Virginie romaine*, éd. Oscar A. Haac (Genève: Droz, 1959), 19, 63.

¹³⁰ See Ballanche, "Formule générale. Deuxième fragment. L'Année 259 de Rome" in *Revue de Paris* 4 (1829): 145.

¹³¹ Frainnet, *Essai sur la philosophie de P.-S. Ballanche* (Paris: Picard, 1903), 144. Brian Juden suggests additional sources of the Erigone episode in "Particularités du mythe d'Orphée chez Ballanche" in *Cahiers de l'Association internationale des Etudes françaises* 22 (1970): 150.

¹³² Mario Praz, *The Romantic Agony* (Oxford: Oxford UP, rev. ed. 1970), 204–205.

¹³³ OC, 5:31.

¹³⁴ OC, 5:326.

The tragedy of Erigone, which “personifies the premature ambition for higher initiation”,¹³⁵ expresses in microcosm the tragedy of the French Revolution.

In *Formule générale*, Virginia, the heroine of the second secession, knows that maenads are excluded from Liber’s cultic banquets.¹³⁶ Liber, or Liber Pater, was an old Italian agriculture and fertility divinity who in later times was identified with Bacchus, and Haac so identifies him here. However, in *Formule générale* the banquets of Liber represent the sum of patrician law; Liber, that is, still functions as a patrician deity who has yet to transform into the plebeian Bacchus, just as the patrician age has yet to evolve into the plebeian age. When, therefore, Virginia says that maenads are excluded from Liber’s banquets, she means that the plebeians are excluded from the patrician social mysteries. Virginia has learned in school the tale of a young maenad who wanted to learn to play Orpheus’ lyre, but who died when she broke the strings that symbolize social initiation. Am I not, she asks, this maenad?¹³⁷ The apparent anachronism of Roman plebeians studying Ballanche’s *Orphée* in their schools—for the story of the unfortunate maenad is the episode of Erigone—underlines Ballanche’s conviction that his works are not original compositions but reconstructions of primitive epic.

Haac erroneously associates Virginia’s maenad with Eurydice. Eurydice, as we have seen, was the daughter of a Titan, and as such she died with the passing of the cosmogonic age to which she belonged. Eurydice did not even see the dawn of the patrician age, never mind the plebeian age. It is rather Erigone who was a maenad, and thus a plebeian. Ballanche himself, in the preface to Book V of *Orphée*, links Erigone with Virginia: “Erigone . . . est, dans la sphère épique, ce que plus tard sera pour nous la Virginie du Mont-Sacré, dans la sphère historique”.¹³⁸ Erigone, a *plébéienne* of the patrician age, died because she presumed to a level of initiation beyond her capacity. Virginia understands herself as a new Erigone, a *plébéienne* who ardently desires initiation, but who must die for her desire. There is, however, an enormous difference between the two deaths. Because Erigone’s desire for initiation was premature her death was without

¹³⁵ Herbert J. Hunt, *The Epic in Nineteenth-Century France* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1941), 89.

¹³⁶ Ballanche, *La Théodécie et la Virginie romaine*, éd. Haac, 119.

¹³⁷ Ballanche, *La Théodécie et la Virginie romaine*, 119.

¹³⁸ OC, 5:290–291.

palingenetic effect. Virginia's death, in contrast, is the final *épreuve* required for the attainment of a stage of initiation in the transition from the patrician age to the plebeian age at Rome. Virginia herself foresees the great social transformation to be completed by her martyrdom:

Compagnes de mon enfance, celle d'entre vous qui, la première, devait détacher de l'arbre sacré le rameau d'or de l'initiation, il fallait qu'elle cessât de vivre cette vie terrestre. Jeunes filles, mes compagnes, votre destinée cessera d'être obscure; ma mort va vous doter d'une destinée éclatante! Au prix de ma vie, je vous laisse le rameau d'or de l'initiation.¹³⁹

It is because the time was ripe for social transformation that Virginia had been able, to the outrage of the patricians, to learn to play the seven-stringed lyre without replicating Erigone and breaking the two strings that correspond to the social laws.¹⁴⁰

The tragedies of Eurydice, Erigone, and Virginia raise the question of the role of love in Ballanche's philosophy of history. Love, Ballanche notes à propos of Erigone's passion for Orpheus, crosses hierarchies and will end by confusing orders and classes;¹⁴¹ similarly, *Ville des Expiations* recognizes love as an aspect of the transition, by means of the Christian law of religious equality, from solidarity to charity in the culmination of the plebeian age. These two references, however, pertain to the culmination of social evolution. During the unfolding of social evolution itself love must be ruthlessly subordinated to the demands of the age lest it interfere with the process of initiation. The one contribution love makes to this process is augmenting the suffering of *époques palingénésiques*. Ballanche never uses erotic love as an image for mystical union in the manner of some Christian mystics. Initiation is always one of knowledge and expiation: knowledge of the law of social evolution and the suffering by which it operates. While love, then, is important for the culmination of social evolution, in the operation of social palingenesis it is a subset of expiation. In this respect, *Palingénésie sociale* has not taken us very far from the world of the "Fragments" and Bertille d'Avèze. Only Alfred de Musset, among major French Romantics, rivals Ballanche in depicting misery as the certain consequence of love.

¹³⁹ Ballanche, *La Théodécie et la Virginie romaine*, 123.

¹⁴⁰ Ballanche, *La Théodécie et la Virginie romaine*, 110.

¹⁴¹ *OC*, 5:325.

Agnès Kettler has pointed to the contradiction between the subordination of women to men in the binary structure of social evolution and Ballanche's faith in a woman redemptrix (Juliette Récamier in his own life; Antigone, Eurydice, and Virginia in his works). She explains the contradiction by noting (following A. J. L. Busst) that Ballanche borrowed from Fabre d'Olivet the idea that Eve represents the volitive faculty of primitive humanity, the exercise of which led to the Fall. Because her weakness led to the degradation of the primitive human being, henceforth divided into two sexes, the woman has been placed under the authority of men, charged with initiating and rehabilitating her. Nevertheless, just as rehabilitation is contained in the Fall, so woman possesses the power necessary for rehabilitation: "Et remarquez ici que, dès l'origine, la femme est désignée pour produire le remède à la faute continuée. C'est donc à la faculté volitive à produire le moyen par lequel la faute sera réparée".¹⁴² It is because woman is at once an initiatable and an initiatrix that Ballanche confides to Antigone, Eurydice, and Virginia, a reparative role. These heroines are pure, innocent victims whose love leads them to sacrifice themselves for the expiation of the original transgression.¹⁴³ Elsewhere Kettler argues that the power of beauty of Ballanche's heroines is critical to initiation.¹⁴⁴

This explanation of the contradictory status of women in Ballanche's thought is not entirely satisfactory. The Fall occurred before, indeed was the cause of, sexual division. The division of primordial Adam can be blamed on woman only in the sense that humanity's volitive principle that caused the Fall was subsequently embodied in Eve/woman. It is correct to say that woman caused the Fall only in the sense that woman, like plebeians and the West, symbolizes the initiatable half of the initiator/initiatable pair produced by postlapsarian division of primordial Adam. Further, Kettler's account of the reparative mission of Ballanche's heroines works well for Antigone, but does not take sufficient account of the subsequent subordination of the contribution of Eurydice and Virginia to the unfolding of the historical law of social evolution. The contradiction is better explained

¹⁴² Ballanche to Barchou de Penhoën, BML MSS 1806-1810, Dossier 10, quoted in Kettler, *Lettres de Ballanche à Madame Récamier*, 224. See also Ballanche to Récamier, 30 August 1832, in Kettler, *Lettres de Ballanche à Madame Récamier*, 586.

¹⁴³ Kettler, *Lettres de Ballanche à Madame Récamier*, 223-225.

¹⁴⁴ Kettler, *Lettres de Ballanche à Madame Récamier*, 262-267.

as an expression of the unresolved tension within Ballanche's thought between platonic eternal ideas and the temporalism of social evolution.

Magnetism

Vision d'Hébal introduces Hébal to us as a Scottish chieftain endowed with second sight. Neuropathic from youth, he experiences somnambulist and cataleptic episodes in which he feels distinct from his usual personality and in which he is subject to unbidden and uncontrollable visions. The vision recounted in this work, which lasts only as long it takes a church clock to toll the Ave Maria, releases him from the limits of space and time. Freed of his individuality, Hébal enters into the heart of collective humanity; his consciousness assimilated to the universal consciousness, he seizes immutable truths and becomes the Universal Man living an infinite life.¹⁴⁵ While the sketch of Hébal that opens the *Vision* clearly identifies the seer with Ballanche himself (though Ballanche undoubtedly drew also on the mystical experiences of Bredin and other friends),¹⁴⁶ these details accord perfectly with contemporary theories about animal magnetism.¹⁴⁷

While the gift of second sight to Scottish Highlanders was a commonplace of the Romantic period, both Deleuze and Bertrand, in their works on animal magnetism, identified Scottish second sight with magnetic somnambulism. Deleuze's observation that the visions of the Scottish Highlanders were generally supposed to be independent of their will agrees with the involuntary character of Hébal's visions. Pététin, Passavant, and other contemporary magnetizers linked a nervous disposition, somnambulism, and catalepsy to magnetism. Their claim that magnetic somnambulism delivers people from the fetters of time and space and that the magnetized somnambule acquires true revelations through a divinely inspired intuition corresponds to Hébal's experience of the suspension of exterior senses, the disappearance of the exterior world, and the free operation of an interior, or sixth, sense in regions of pure intelligence. Contemporary magnetizers, finally, enrolled inspired prophets of all ages and civilizations

¹⁴⁵ *VH*, 114, 118–119.

¹⁴⁶ Buche, *L'Ecole mystique de Lyon*, 211–212. Ballanche often signed his letters to the comtesse d'Hautefeuille "Hébal".

¹⁴⁷ Busst offers an excellent discussion of animal magnetism and the *Vision d'Hébal* in *VH*, 88–104.

as magnetic somnambulists and cataleptics. Hébal, in sum, is a magnetized Ossian and *Vision d'Hébal* a "rêverie magnétique"; that is to say, a vision entirely constructed according to contemporary theories of animal magnetism.¹⁴⁸

Hébal is not the first instance of a "rêverie magnétique" in Ballanche's works. Compare Orpheus' description of his poetic vision in Book II of *Orphée*:

Les instincts de ma lyre, comme les blanches ailes de la colombe, me soulevaient au-dessus de la terre et me tenaient suspendu dans les hautes régions que le corps ne peut habiter. Mais mon âme, un instant éperdue, retombait bientôt dans sa prison terrestre. Un jour, durant mon voyage dans les hautes régions de l'esprit, il me sembla voir une grande lumière qui enveloppait la nature immense, et éclairait profondément toutes choses. Ma vue n'était point assez rapide, ni ma pensée assez active pour être par-tout à-la-fois dans un instant indivisible. J'eus néanmoins un sentiment réel mais obscure et indéfinissable de l'essence et de l'ensemble de tout ce qui existe (*OC*, 5:168).

The inspiration of the primitive seer corresponds to Hébal's magnetic vision. Allusions to magnetism, in fact, appear throughout *Palin-génésie sociale*.

In *Prolegomènes*, Ballanche links magnetic somnambulism and linguistic capability as two survivals of a primitive human faculty:

Les langages ne sont peut-être qu'un produit de cette faculté primitive qu'eut l'homme de communiquer sa pensée à la pensée de son semblable, comme nous le voyons dans le somnambulisme, sans l'intermédiaire des sens extérieurs, des organes de nos communications actuelles (*OC*, 4:358).

There then follows a discussion on deaf-mutes based on Fabre d'Olivet. A passage from the *Vision d'Hébal* similarly links language and magnetism in terms derived from Fabre: "Alors il comprend le mystère du langage, qui est le son articulé, le son magnétisé, dans tout l'appareil vocal, par tout l'homme, par toutes les facultés de l'homme, par la pensée que Dieu a réveillée de son sommeil".¹⁴⁹ In 1811 Fabre d'Olivet claimed to have healed a deaf-mute named Rodolphe Grivel through the application of principles established in *La Langue hébraïque restituée*.¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁸ Busst, *VH*, 88, 95–101.

¹⁴⁹ *VH*, 150. Busst notes that, according to Fabre d'Olivet, language is magnetized sound because the volitive faculty, awakened by animal magnetism, is associated with the act of speaking.

¹⁵⁰ Fabre d'Olivet, *Guérison de Rodolphe Grivel, sourd-muet: Notions sur le Sens de l'Ouïe*

With his translation and commentary on the first five books of the Bible, we recall, Fabre claimed to have restored the sacred language of the ancient Hebrews and reestablished the cosmogony of Moses. This primitive revelation contains the principles of all sciences, ancient and modern. Fabre regarded the healing of Grivel as a demonstration of the truth of the primitive principles and thus of his reconstruction of them. According to Léon Cellier's brilliant analysis, Fabre considered hearing, like the exercise of any sense, to be a manifestation of the volitive faculty (itself one of Fabre's three cosmogonic principles). Deafness may be cured by awakening the volitive faculty of the deaf person. But how is the volitive faculty to be awakened? It is here that Fabre turns to *La Langue hébraïque restituée*. Genesis 2:21 recounts that Eve was created from Adam's rib while Adam was in a deep sleep. Fabre translates "deep sleep" as "un sommeil profond et sympathique", and in his commentary identifies it with magnetic sleep or somnambulism. Eve, in Fabre's system, corresponds to the volitive faculty. The Genesis passage therefore tells us that the volitive faculty is awakened through magnetized sleep. Fabre healed deafness by plunging the subject into a somnambulistic state and though the action of his own will (nb. the importance of the will in magnetism for the Puysegurs) awakened in the subject the faculty of hearing (and of speaking, because for Fabre hearing is indispensable to speech).¹⁵¹

Ballanche was familiar with *Notions sur le sens de l'ouïe*. In June 1811, we recall, Ballanche notified Beuchot of its safe arrival in Lyon. A little later he asked Ampère in Paris to investigate Fabre's cure so that they could help a mutual friend whose daughters were deaf.¹⁵² Ballanche's comments on language and magnetism in *Prolégomènes* and *Vision d'Hébal* are taken directly from Fabre. Moreover, *Vision d'Hébal* reproduces Fabre's version of the birth of Eve: "Et la femme, qui était sortie de sa propre chair pendant un sommeil magnétique. . . ."¹⁵³ Elsewhere, Ballanche pursues the connection between magnetism and humanity's primitive faculties. In *Ville des Expiations* he suggests that

(Paris: 1811); second edition: *Notions sur le Sens de l'Ouïe, en générale, et en particulier sur le Développement de ce Sens opéré chez Rodolphe Grivel et chez plusieurs autres enfants sourd-muets de naissance* (Paris: 1819).

¹⁵¹ Cellier, *Fabre d'Olivet*, 162–182, esp. 179.

¹⁵² See Ampère to Bredin, 10 April 1813, in Ampère, *Correspondance du grand Ampère*, 2:438, for an account of the examination of the girls by Puysegur himself and "la fameuse somnambule de Buzancy dont on a tant et tant parlé".

¹⁵³ *VH*, 143.

second sight, regarded by most as a superstitious illusion, is in fact a vestige of otherwise lost primitive faculties. Later in the same work, Ballanche suggests that these faculties will be reacquired as humanity evolves: “Les phénomènes magnétiques ne présagent-ils pas un nouveau mode de perceptions possibles”.¹⁵⁴ The Egyptian sages of *Orphée*, for their part, cultivate clairvoyance as a faculty that can be developed through study and meditation.¹⁵⁵

Of greater relevance to Ballanche's philosophy of history are his references to the “*chaîne magnétique*”. While speaking in *Prolégomènes* about the past and future evolution of humanity, Ballanche makes the point that humanity is linked to eternity by both its past and its future by means of a magnetic chain:

Cette chaîne des destinées humaines, qui est une chaîne magnétique, s'attache, par les deux extrémités, au trône sacré, auguste, invisible et pourtant irrécusable du mystère. Nous ne voyons pas ce trône, mais nous sentons que la chaîne y tient; et cette chaîne est magnétique, car sans cela comment pourrions-nous remonter d'anneau en anneau (*OC*, 4:77).

This passage is strongly reminiscent of the opening lines of Joseph de Maistre's *Considérations sur la France*: “Nous sommes tous attachés au trône de l'Etre Suprême par une chaîne souple, qui nous retient sans nous asservir”. Nevertheless, Ballanche's insistence that the chain must be magnetic if we are to reascend it points to Fabre d'Olivet. Discussing poetic inspiration a few pages later, Ballanche notes that primitive poets possessed true inspiration whereas Virgil had a secondary inspiration. This judgement, he tells us, is based on Plato's comparison of poetic inspiration to the power of a magnet in the *Ion*.¹⁵⁶ Ballanche's source for this entire passage is Fabre d'Olivet's “Discours sur l'essence et la forme de la poésie”. In the *Ion* itself, Socrates, arguing that the abilities of poets and rhapsodists come not from their own powers but from a divine power moving in them, compares poetic inspiration to magnetism.

[A magnetic stone] not only attracts iron rings but imparts to those rings the power to do what the stone itself does—to attract other rings in turn; so that sometimes you get a long chain of rings and bits of iron, all hanging one from the other, the power of them being dependent on that stone. In the same way the Muse first inspires men herself;

¹⁵⁴ *VE*, 29–30, 115.

¹⁵⁵ *OC*, 6:114.

¹⁵⁶ *OC*, 4:99–100.

and then from these men whom she inspires there is suspended a chain of others who catch the inspiration in their turn. . . . Now by means of all these God draws men's souls in whichever direction he wants, making each man's power depend on that of another.¹⁵⁷

Fabre d'Olivet extends Plato's comparison from poetic inspiration to the regeneration of the world. *Hommes providentiels* possess immediate primary inspiration emanating from the first principle of all intelligence, just as the magnetic force that animates the magnet emanates from its cause. This force, deeply hidden from our eyes, inflames the genius of a theosoph like Zoroaster, a theocrat like Moses or Mohammad, a philosopher like Pythagoras, a poet like Homer, or a hero like Alexander. These primordial men are followed by those who receive a secondary inspiration. Such men can themselves be great because they can still communicate to others the inspiration that surges within them. The result, extending Plato's image, is a chain of inspired men through which Divinity acts in the world and attracts humanity to itself.¹⁵⁸

Fabre's doctrine, aside from enrolling Plato among the esoteric magnetizers, explains Ballanche's insistence that the chain linking humanity to the divine throne must be magnetic if we are to reascend it. In the Epilogue to the *Orphée* Ballanche, looking ahead to the *Formule générale* that is to follow in the plan of *Palingénésie sociale*, declares: "Je vais continuer à suivre la chaîne magnétique des traditions".¹⁵⁹ Ballanche's Orpheus and the other transmitters of primitive wisdom possess primary inspiration; through the transmission of primitive wisdom by means of the general traditions and initiation, all humanity will eventually form a single great chain of rehabilitated peoples. In *Formule générale* Ballanche reverses the chain, declaring that an "intellectual magnetism" will guide his historical explorations into the darkness of origins: "Armé du rameau d'or de l'initiation, je vais donc m'enfoncer dans les mystérieuses ténèbres des origines. Nulle sibylle ne guidera mes pas. C'est le tact des analogies, baguette magnétique, mais d'un magnétisme intellectuel, qui sera mon rameau d'or".¹⁶⁰

¹⁵⁷ Plato, *Symposium and Other Dialogues*, trans. John Warrington (London: J. M. Dent, 1964), 67, 70.

¹⁵⁸ Fabre d'Olivet, "Discours sur l'essence et la forme de la poésie" in *Vers dorés de Pythagore*, 66–68.

¹⁵⁹ *OC*, 6:269.

¹⁶⁰ Ballanche, "Formule générale. Premier fragment. Prologue" in *Revue de Paris* 2 (1829): 146. See also Juden, *Traditions orphiques et tendances mystiques*, 269.

Ballanche's identification of the history of social evolution as a magnetic chain appropriates Fabre d'Olivet's conception of the regeneration of humanity as an ascent to the divine along a magnetic chain of inspiration while redefining the chain as his own philosophy of history: the chain that links humanity, in its past and in its future, to the throne of mystery is the progressive unfolding of social evolution.

While it is sometimes difficult to tell what in Ballanche comes directly from Fabre d'Olivet, Saint-Martin, Boehme, or Swedenborg, and what comes from these or other theosophs via Bredin or other intermediaries, the centrality to *Palingénésie sociale* of the Illuminist themes of the primordial Adam, a cosmos of correspondences, the identity of the Fall and rehabilitation, redemption as the reintegration of lost unity, the role of initiation in the reintegrative process, and magnetism demonstrates how deeply Ballanche's philosophy of history is indebted to the Western Esoteric Tradition. These Illuminist themes provided Ballanche with the language with which to unify his philosophy of history and merge the complexes of terms symbolized by expiation and progress. Initiation assimilates both expiation and progress: social classes merit initiation through suffering, and each successive initiation represents a social evolutionary advance, the sum of which constitute the rehabilitation of humanity. Similarly, *Palingénésie sociale* expresses the motive force underlying social evolution in Illuminist language: social evolution operates by means of initiation and the doctrine of the identity of the Fall and rehabilitation establishes the primordial division of humanity into initiators and initiateables required for the operation of social evolution.

CHAPTER TWELVE

HISTORIOGRAPHY & MYTHOGRAPHY

This chapter sets out the historiographical principles that underlie social evolution through initiation, and shows how the application of these principles to the data of the history of religions means that Ballanche's philosophy of history is also a mythography. Its final section situates Ballanche's mythography within the context of contemporary approaches to the study of religions.

Myth, epic, history

Epic poetry, according to the poetics that Ballanche worked out in *Institutions sociales*, represents in allegorical form the history of the human race. Epic heroes are not historical individuals, but rather representative figures who embody the history of their ages. Further, epic poetry takes as its subject ages of crisis; hence, epics usually depict times of end and renewal, with all their trauma and providential import. Epicists draw their knowledge of history from the mythology of their nations; that is, from their particular versions of the general traditions of the human race. The closer a poet stays to the traditions, the better history his epic will be. True poets, therefore, are simply transmitters, not inventors. The sum of the epic poetry of all nations ought to contain the entire history of the providential evolution of humanity preserved in the traditions, or, rather, each people and each age ought to possess its own version of the universal history of the human race. Unfortunately, of this precious allegorical history only a few fragments from antiquity have survived, and none from later ages.¹ What is conventionally called history, Ballanche insists, cannot compensate for the loss of epic poetry because it is a debased history, a fall from the true poetic history of the epicists. The debasement of poetry into history began in Greece when, instead of simply transmitting the allegorical history of the epics, writers began to filter

¹ OC, 2:326–332.

it through their own imaginations and critical judgements. In so doing, they failed to realize that allegorical history points to a deeper truth than a literal record of events. Consequently, they dismissed the mythological inheritance and the epics derived from it as a collection of fanciful tales, amusing but false. Such writers then passed on to later generations literal histories of specific events in place of the allegorical history of the human race as a whole.² From Greece, the debasement of history spread to Rome. Virgil, alone of the Latin poets, understood the allegorical nature of epic and remained loyal to the traditions; thus the *Aeneid* embodies true history:

Virgile, en racontant les origines de l'empire romain, en transportant les pénates de Troie sur la vieille terre du Latium, nous montre comment les traditions lient les générations les unes aux autres. Son héros, homme pieux, père d'une tige royale, est le vrai fondateur d'une société humaine. . . . Mais Virgile fit plus: il devança, sous ce rapport, le siècle où il vivait, rare prérogative des génies de l'ordre le plus élevé (*OC*, 2:329–330; see also 334).

Ballanche criticizes modern historiographic practice for perpetuating debased history. By insisting on impartiality and the sifting of evidence, historians become bogged down in the minutiae of detail and fail to see the overall direction of history. Epic poets were true historians precisely because their allegorical genius saw behind events to the providential law governing them. Historians, to the extent that they have abandoned poetry, have lost their grasp of the underlying meaning of history. Bossuet's *Histoire universelle* (1681), alone of modern historical works, gives an idea of the scope and nature of true history. Ballanche urges modern historians to look behind centuries of debased history to the traditions themselves in order to revive true history.³

In *Palingénésie sociale* Ballanche again takes up the relationship between epic and history. And whereas in *Institutions sociales* Ballanche's poetics and his theory of social progress were parallel but independent, *Palingénésie sociale* anchors social progress in myth, epic, and history. Indeed, Ballanche confesses in *Ville des Expiations* that his historical meditations have taught him much about the social world that was unknown to him when he composed *Institutions sociales*.⁴ Classical historians such as Herodotus and Dionysios of Halicarnassus, Ballanche

² *OC*, 2:333.

³ *OC*, 2:378–380.

⁴ *VE*, 25.

writes in *Prolegomènes*, rehearsing the argument of *Institutions sociales*, reduced poetry to history by considering the myths recounted by the epicists as nothing more than “un tissu de fables inventées”; for them, “la langue des mythes, discréditée et méconnue, n’était plus l’expression forte de cette poésie primitive où résidait la vérité des traditions”.⁵ Misunderstanding the allegorical language of myths, classical historians failed to discern their witness to the mysterious force directing the events of history. By thereby detaching events from the underlying order that alone gives them meaning, classical historians debased history. Properly interpreted, however, the events recorded by the traditions and transmitted in epic poetry point beyond themselves to manifest the reigning thought of a given era.⁶ Enlightenment historians revived the wrong antiquity; scorning the treasures preserved in mythology and epic poetry, Gibbon and his ilk salvaged instead the dross of the debased history of the classical historians. Ballanche argues that history can reclaim a share in truth only if it again looks beyond events to the order they manifest. Modern historians must remake history by transcending a literal interest in events and grasping the underlying direction of history.

Myths, then, are emblems of historical truth. Ballanche’s mythography is sympathetic to the euhemerist position, but inverts it. Whereas euhemerists, ancient or modern, argue that myths recount the actions of heroes and rulers apotheosized by grateful or astonished peoples, Ballanche gives priority to the myths themselves, maintaining that the various peoples of antiquity domesticated already established myths by linking them to names and places familiar to them through some historical event. Through this process universal mythic figures appear under a myriad of names; every people, Ballanche says, had its Hercules and its sibyl. By a similar process geographic names shifted their signification as they were appropriated by different peoples. The name Hesperia, or Western Land, for example, was successively borne by Epirus, Italy, and Spain. The tendency of each people to claim the universal mythology as its own national mythology has confused contemporary mythographers, but the confusion may be cleared up by recognizing all national mythologies as variations on a single ideal mythology.⁷ The ideal, universal mythology, moreover, is

⁵ *OC*, 4:175.

⁶ *OC*, 6:286.

⁷ *OC*, 4:90–94, 97.

nothing other than an allegorization of the history of the human race; that is, social evolution. In the history of early antiquity, Ballanche observes, the stages of social evolution are often confused with each other and difficult to distinguish; it is only in myth that one finds them clearly marked.⁸

Ballanche's understanding of myth as allegorized history enrolls him in the revival of allegorical mythography inaugurated by Antoine Court de Gébelin in the late eighteenth century. The allegorical interpretation of mythology originated in Antiquity itself when the Stoics sought to reconcile popular religion with their philosophy by demonstrating that, allegorically interpreted, the frivolous and often cruel or immoral pastimes of the Olympic gods figure deeper philosophical meaning. The Neoplatonists, applying allegorical interpretation not only to Greek mythology and poetry but also to the religious traditions of foreign peoples, discovered depths of spiritual meaning in all traditional texts. Typical of this approach, Sallust, the fourth-century CE philosopher and friend of the emperor Julian, in his treatise, *On the Gods and the World*, declares the universe to be a great myth and defends mythology as a vast reservoir of spiritual truth whose true meaning is accessible only to the initiate.⁹ Through the intermediary of the Church Fathers allegorical interpretation became the standard approach to classical mythology and poetry throughout the Middle Ages and into the Renaissance and beyond. Athanasius Kircher's virtuoso use of analogy and allegorical interpretation in *Oedipus Aegyptiacus* (1652–1654) to read the religious, philosophical, and scientific systems of all peoples of the world back into Egyptian wisdom would have brought tears of admiration to the eyes of any Stoic or Neoplatonic philosopher who happened to find himself transported into the seventeenth century.

The long continuity of allegorical mythography was abruptly shattered in the eighteenth century when Enlightenment thinkers rejected allegorical interpretations of myth. Here, as so often, the first to enunciate what would become the standard Enlightenment view was Pierre Bayle (1647–1706). Bayle argued, in *Dictionnaire historique et critique* (1696–1697) and elsewhere, that the ancient pagans had understood their myths literally. Deriding allegorical interpretations, Bayle revealed ancient mythology as nothing other than tales of gross immorality

⁸ *OC*, 4:219.

⁹ Jean Seznec, *The Survival of the Pagan Gods*, trans. Barbara Sessions (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1953), 84–85.

and cruelty, and ancient religion as stupid adoration of objects and animals. Far from figuring sublime religious truths, mythology and idolatry were shameful affronts to human dignity and reason.¹⁰ Charles de Brosses (a friend, as it happens, of Charles Bonnet), drew on Bayle's identification of ancient Greek religion with the fetishism of contemporary savage peoples, as well as on David Hume's account of the psychological origin of fetishism in *Natural History of Religion* (1757), in his *Du culte des dieux fétiches, ou Parallele de l'ancienne religion de l'Égypte avec la religion actuelle de Nigritie* (1760). Here, Brosses, targeting both Kircher's allegorical method and his interpretation of ancient Egyptian religion, identifies ancient Egyptian animal worship with the adoration of fetishes in contemporary West Africa. On this foundation he built a universally applicable theory of religious progress.¹¹ In unveiling the true nature of primitive religion, and therefore—given the Enlightenment equation of origins with nature—of the nature of religion itself, the anti-allegorical mythographers of the mid-eighteenth century (among whom we must number Boulanger and Holbach as well as Brosses) contributed to the anti-clerical campaign of the Enlightenment. They studied religion in order to eradicate it; in place of the violence and cruelty of the primitive mythopoeic world, they promised progress through reason. The benighted primitive of their mythographic studies became the starting point for the ideologies of rectilinear progress that culminated in the Turgot-Condorcet theory of perfectibility.¹²

The anti-allegorists did not, however, have the field of eighteenth-century mythography to themselves. Court de Gébelin made it his life work to defend allegory and primitive wisdom. Nevertheless, the allegorical interpretation of antiquity set out in *Le Monde primitif* (1773–1782) is not simply a revival of the old allegorical mythography because Court de Gébelin grounds his theory of allegory on what is for the most part a typically eighteenth-century theory of language. Words were first formed by imitating sounds and served to express physical relations between human beings and natural objects. The written letter, in turn, was derived from a sign translating a physical gesture having an analogue with the sound. Since the primitive mentality was con-

¹⁰ Frank E. Manuel, *The Eighteenth Century Confronts the Gods* (New York: Athenaeum, 1967), 26–28.

¹¹ Manuel, *The Eighteenth Century Confronts the Gods*, 28, 187–194.

¹² Manuel, *The Eighteenth Century Confronts the Gods*, 147–148.

crete, the first words of the original language described only a few visible objects. As humanity progressed and the need arose to express abstractions and complex moral ideas, it met this need by figurative and analogical extensions of its concrete vocabulary. Hence allegory, the genius of the primitive world, was born from the limitations of the original concrete, sensory language of the first peoples.¹³ Despite, however, these affinities with sensationist theorists of language, Court de Gébelin insists on the divine origin of language on the grounds that only God could establish the relations between words and the objects they signify.¹⁴

Mythology, for Court de Gébelin, similarly arises from the allegorical genius of primitive humanity:

Je vois l'Allégorie briller de toutes parts, donner le ton à cette Antiquité entière, créer ses fables, présider à ses symboles, animer la Mythologie, se mêler avec les vérités les plus augustes, devenir le véhicule des connaissances humaines, leur fournir un appui indispensable . . . on ne doit rien conclure contre le Génie Symbolique de l'Antiquité.¹⁵

As the product of allegory, mythology cannot be explained historically, in the manner of the anti-allegorists, as the earliest, near-brutish stage in the progressive ascent of humanity toward perfectibility. Court de Gébelin asserts that the full significance of mythology can be understood only in relation to the religion of primitive times.¹⁶ Just as allegorical language arose in response to need, so too myths and rituals are allegories of the filling of a specific need (usually pertaining to the struggle against nature or agriculture). *Le Monde primitif* depicts primitive human beings as rational utilitarians and their mythmakers as wise moral historians and legislators teaching virtue through their exaltation of the triumphs of humanity over need. Court de Gébelin calls the rational progression of needs successively overcome the Great Order, and identifies it as the religion of the primitive world. Over the course of time the events myths originally depicted were forgotten, and mythology became the maze of seeming irrationality and immorality that so offended Bayle and Brosses. But now Court de Gébelin,

¹³ Manuel, *The Eighteenth Century Confronts the Gods*, 253–254; Brian Juden, *Traditions orphiques et tendances mystiques dans le romantisme français, 1800–1855* (Paris: Klincksieck, 1971), 92.

¹⁴ Léon Cellier, *Fabre d'Olivet. Contribution à l'Etude des aspects religieux du romantisme* (Paris: Nizet, 1953), 135.

¹⁵ Court de Gébelin, *Le Monde primitif*, 9 vols. (Paris: 1773–1782), 1:4.

¹⁶ Juden, *Traditions orphiques et tendances mystiques*, 91–92.

the friend and disciple of the Physiocrats, has revealed every myth, every ritual, and every monument of antiquity to be an allegory of the Great Order.¹⁷ The epigraph to *Le Monde primitif* is Sallust's dictum that the universe is itself a great myth. And yet, Court de Gébelin's allegorical mythology is not, owing to its eighteenth-century elements, Sallust's. The invisible order that governs the world revealed by his mythography is the rational Great Order, not the spiritual truths of Sallust or Kircher.

Fabre d'Olivet considered himself the successor to Court de Gébelin. His allegorical mythography is similarly based on etymologies and he too considers the study of languages to be the indispensable key to the exploration of the past. Fabre d'Olivet claimed to have greatly improved on Court de Gébelin owing to the advances in scientificity represented by his linguistic studies. These linguistic speculations, we recall, were part of his theosophical project of recovering the mystical significance of primitive language. Fabre renounced the eighteenth-century elements of Court de Gébelin's allegorism entirely. In place of the Great Order of rational perfectibility, Fabre discovers spiritual truths; in place of allegories of practical lessons on agriculture or cosmography, Fabre discerns abstract speculations.¹⁸ The result is an allegorical mythography strongly reminiscent of Kircher's, whom, surprisingly, he seems not to have read.¹⁹ It is not, therefore, a matter of the influence of Kircher overruling that of Court de Gébelin, but rather of the homology between early nineteenth-century Illuminism and Renaissance Neoplatonism and Hermeticism.

Ballanche was thoroughly acquainted with the allegorical mythographies of both Court de Gébelin and Fabre d'Olivet. He also knew the allegorical tradition that runs from late antiquity to Kircher:

Le traité de Diis et Mundo, qui n'est pas de Salluste le dernier philosophe cynique, né à Emèse, en Syrie, dans le VI^e siècle, mais, selon Brucker, d'un autre Salluste, philosophe gaulois du commencement du IV^e siècle; ce traité, nommé par le P. Kircher un livre d'or, dit très bien que l'univers est un grand mythe.²⁰

¹⁷ Manuel, *The Eighteenth Century Confronts the Gods*, 251–255.

¹⁸ Cellier, *Fabre d'Olivet*, 121, 134–136, 148. Louis-Claude de Saint-Martin, in *Tableau naturel* (1782), similarly criticized Court de Gébelin for failing to discern the eternal spiritual truths in mythological allegories. See Pierre Albouy, *La Création mythologique chez Victor Hugo* (Paris: J. Corti, 2^e éd. 1985), 38.

¹⁹ According to Cellier, *Fabre d'Olivet*, 148.

²⁰ OC, 4:255. Sallust's dictum is also cited at OC, 4:97.

Like Court de Gébelin and Fabre d'Olivet, Ballanche considers philology the key to unlocking primitive allegory:

Souvent un mot est un témoin qu'il faut interroger scrupuleusement, parcequ'il a assisté à plusieurs révolutions, et qu'il en sait le secret: ce témoin est d'autant plus précieux qu'il est naïf comme un enfant, impartial comme un vénérable juge, impassible comme une loi que les hommes n'ont pas faite. Je l'ai souvent dit, les annales des peuples sont dans leurs langues, comme les archives du genre humain sont dans les monuments des langues qui ont successivement régné (*OC*, 4:177).

Ballanche elsewhere praises Vico for having grasped that philology is the key to comprehending antiquity,²¹ and concludes his discussion of Vico in *Prolegomènes* by citing a passage from the *New Science* on the importance of philology for history: "A language of an ancient nation, which has maintained itself as the dominant tongue until it was fully developed, should be a great witness to the customs of the early days of the world".²² Once again, however, an apparent affinity between Ballanche and Vico disguises a fundamental difference. The philological method common to the *New Science* and *Palinogénésie sociale* serves radically opposed historiographies. Discussing historical method in his *Autobiography*, Vico declares:

Historians of the age of men, who had lost the key to primitive psychology and supposed that men had always thought like themselves, took these popular traditions for literal history and invented chronological systems which they could be trimmed to fit. Until their work was dissolved again into the elements from which they had composed it, and until these mythic elements were interpreted by the new science, there could be no credible history of Greece and Rome before the Peloponnesian and the Second Punic War.²³

Here we have a criticism of the work of classical historians and a call to return to the study of myth in order to discover the lost key to the true history of earliest times. While this is strongly reminiscent of Ballanche's attack on debased history, Ballanche's "new science" is something very different from Vico's *scienza nuova*. Whereas Vico was attempting to recover the barbarous mode of thought of the first humans who created myths as a pre-rational form of expression,

²¹ *OC*, 5:20.

²² Vico, *New Science*, § 152. Ballanche cites the passage in Italian, not in Michelet's 1827 translation. *OC*, 4:203.

²³ Vico, *The Autobiography of Giambattista Vico*, ed. Max Fisch and Thomas Bergin (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1944), 58.

Ballanche, like Court de Gébelin and Fabre d'Olivet, studies mythology in order to recover the traditional wisdom they preserve in allegorical form. Nevertheless, Ballanche's discovery of Vico did encourage him in his reading of myth as allegorical history.

It is because the mysterious force directing history is accessible to the modern historian through the surviving languages and myths of antiquity that Ballanche considers a return to allegorical history possible. History, according to the "Prologue" to *Formule générale*, is a palimpsest: hidden beneath the accretions of debased history lies the true history of the ancient poets.²⁴ And this true history is accessible in myth: "nous savons que le mythe est une histoire condensée, et que nous sommes appelés à lire cette histoire".²⁵ If, however, we are called to read the history condensed in myth, we must have a key by which to read it. Ballanche believes that this key has been supplied not by Court de Gébelin's utilitarian principle of need nor by Fabre d'Olivet's theosophy but by the epochal events of recent times. Ballanche's mythography, in short, subordinates the undeniable influences of Court de Gébelin, Fabre d'Olivet, and Vico to the law of plebeian evolution revealed in the French Revolution.

The historiographical Revolution

Because each age of crisis augments knowledge of the general law of human development, history must be rewritten after each age of crisis.²⁶ The French Revolution, the latest such palingenetic moment, revealed that the guiding principle of history is plebeian evolution, or the progressive emancipation of the human race. History must now be rewritten because we are now better able to interpret the past than previous historians since we know the unfolding of the providential order more fully than previous historians: "Les expériences de la révolution française ont allumé un flambeau qui éclaire au loin les histoires anciennes, comme il éclaire, dans un horizon plus rapproché, les histoires modernes".²⁷ Read now, in light of the Revolution, all ancient languages and myths manifest, in a more or less confused form, the

²⁴ Ballanche, "Formule générale. Premier fragment. Prologue" in *Revue de Paris* 2 (1829): 144.

²⁵ *OC*, 5:20.

²⁶ *OC*, 6:288–289.

²⁷ *OC*, 6:289.

same history of plebeian evolution: "chaque peuple ancien a sa cosmogonie sociale, laquelle est une image, un écho, une transformation d'une cosmogonie générale, universelle".²⁸ In this manner, Ballanche says, speaking of the classical Roman historians but thinking of Bayle and other moderns, the pyrrhonism of history may be overcome.²⁹

In addition to clarifying all previous history by revealing the law of plebeian evolution, the Revolution, Ballanche argues, has in some sense compressed the history of the human race into a single generation:

[Varron] avait voulu écrire l'histoire du peuple romain comme on fait l'histoire d'un homme. J'ose dire qu'à présent une telle histoire est plus facile qu'au temps de Varron. Elle est plus facile sur-tout pour nous qui avons assisté à toute la révolution française, parceque cette révolution, si fertile en enseignements de tous genres, est un cours complet en action. C'est l'histoire de plusieurs siècles, c'est l'histoire de tout un empire, c'est même l'histoire du genre humain jusqu'à nos jours, avec ses phases les plus diverses; et cette histoire est resserrée dans l'espace de quelques années (*OC*, 4:179–180).

Though the philological method is old, only now, thanks to the interpretive key revealed by the Revolution, is it able to disclose fully the true history of the human race.

Though Ballanche insists that his philological method is rigorously scholarly,³⁰ the modern reader is more likely to think of the dubious philological practices of antiquity chastised by his contemporary Barthold Niebuhr: "The spirit of absurdity . . . always came over the most sagacious of the Greeks and Romans the moment they meddled with etymology".³¹ Ballanche's etymological nonsense may be attributed to his mercenary attitude toward philology. He was not interested in etymologies for their own sake, as Niebuhr and Friedrich Schlegel were beginning to be, nor did he investigate the principles of the nascent comparative grammar of Jacob Grimm and Franz Bopp.³² Ballanche's criterion of judgement for a given etymology is its affinity with the law of history revealed by the events of the French Revolution. He values philology for the evidence it provides for his historiography, just as the etymological fantasies of Court de Gébelin

²⁸ *OC*, 5:5.

²⁹ *OC*, 4:179.

³⁰ *OC*, 5:13–14.

³¹ Quoted in Emery Neff, *The Poetry of History* (New York: Columbia UP, 1963), 100.

³² Ballanche discusses the nature of philology, and criticizes F. Schlegel in passing, in Chapter IX of *Institutions sociales*. *OC*, 2:220–276.

and Fabre d'Olivet supported, respectively, the Great Order and theosophic truths.

Is not, it may be objected, Ballanche's rewriting of history merely provisional, since the next palingenetic age will in turn necessitate another revision? In fact, though Ballanche does not say so directly, at least not in this context, the Revolution has inaugurated the final stage of terrestrial evolution. The age now dawning will bring the culmination of social evolution and subsequent evolution of humanity will be a purely spiritual progress through the celestial hierarchies. The Revolution, therefore, because it inaugurates the final stage of human society, also and thereby introduces the final recension of its history.

While all history must be rewritten, Ballanche realizes that such a massive task is far beyond the capacity of a single scholar. He sets himself a more modest goal:

Quant à moi, je ne veux montrer qu'une chose, c'est cette lutte, sans cesse renouvelée, concentrée ailleurs dans les diverses mythologies civiles, et manifestée chez les Romains par une série de faits historiques, la lutte universelle du plébéenisme contre le patriciat, c'est à dire, comme nous l'avons vu, l'initiation même de l'humanité (*OC*, 4:183–184).

Orphée and *Formule générale* are nothing other than complementary attempts to demonstrate that the various mythologies of the ancient world and Roman history, respectively, bear witness to the universal struggle of plebeianism against patriciates. *Palingénésie sociale* thus commences the final and authoritative version of the history of humanity on earth.

The work of previous historians must be corrected, of course; yet, even the ancient epicists, to the extent that they interpreted rather than simply transmitted the traditions, require revision. Whereas in *Institutions sociales* Ballanche praised the *Aeneid* as a rare exemplar of true history, in "Première Addition aux *Prolégomènes*", while acknowledging Virgil's merit, he argues that because Virgil lacked an understanding of the law of plebeian evolution the *Aeneid* constitutes a one-sided, patrician view of Roman history.³³ Ballanche himself, by returning to the uncorrupted traditions, transmits primitive history more faithfully than Virgil:

³³ *OC*, 5:8.

Je disais tout-à-l'heure que Virgile n'est ni un poète mythographe ni un théosophe; je ne le mets points non plus au nombre des hommes spontanés: qu'il me soit permis d'affirmer que l'inspiration à laquelle j'obéis est plus près des inspirations primitives; oui, j'ai plus que Virgile, incomparablement plus, le sentiment de ces choses que j'oserai appeler divines (*OC*, 4:107-108).

Livy, like Virgil unaware of the providential law of plebeian evolution, similarly interpreted the Struggle of the Orders at Rome as nothing more than a drawn-out revolt.³⁴ Ballanche considers himself able to supersede Virgil's and Livy's ideological history because the events of the Revolution have taught him that history is the story of the progressive emancipation of humanity. He would, of course, reject outright the suggestion that his interpretation of history is itself ideological. He believes that he has divined the providential order to history that transcends and supersedes ideology.

Orphée, as Ballanche's reconstruction of primitive epic, revives and corrects the allegorical history of the ancient epicists. In this work Ballanche undertakes, by means of the interpretation of myths, to extend the horizon of history as far as possible into the night of origins:

Plus on pénétrera dans l'*Orphée*, plus l'on sentira que ce livre est profondément historique. Je raconte environ quinze siècles de l'humanité. Ce qui a précédé se résumé, ici par des mythes, là par des dogmes, et vous comprenez que les mythes sont les transformations des dogmes. Je ne dis pas qu'il soit impossible de pénétrer au-delà: mais je dis qu'on ne peut y pénétrer que par les traditions générales du genre humain . . . Jacob Böhme et Saint-Martin se sont enfoncés dans les profondeurs de cet horizon. Je suis resté en deça. Cela tient à ce que je suis seulement historien.³⁵

Orphée falls silent only before what is not historically demonstrable, even indirectly through myths. The end result is the discernment of the archetypal pattern of the first fifteen centuries of the human race. *Orphée*, as the universal pre-history of all peoples up to the dawn of the plebeian age, supplants the *Aeneid* as the preamble to the true history of Rome.

Ballanche is sometimes accused of promising, then failing to deliver,

³⁴ Ballanche, "Formule générale. Premier fragment. Prologue" in *Revue de Paris* 2 (1829): 151.

³⁵ Ballanche to La Tour du Pin, 22 June 1829, in Charles Huit, *La Vie et les Oeuvres de Ballanche* (Lyon: Vitte, 1904), 198.

esoteric knowledge in *Orphée*.³⁶ This is unfair; Ballanche wrote *Orphée* in order to demonstrate the operation of social evolution in pre-history. The only “esoteric” knowledge it contains is the law of social evolution itself, a knowledge that was indeed esoteric in antiquity but is no longer so now that first Christianity and then the French Revolution have revealed the law of plebeian evolution for all to see. In fact, the progressive unfolding of social evolution may be conceptualized as a movement from esotericism to exotericism.³⁷ *Palingénésie sociale* proclaims that the approaching universalization of initiation in the culmination of social evolution has rendered the very notion of esotericism obsolete in modern Europe.³⁸

Formule générale both supplements the ideal allegorical history of *Orphée* by supplying positive evidence for it and extends it chronologically by depicting the transition at Rome from the patrician to the plebeian age. There is no difference in the content of the two works (the unfolding of the law of social evolution), only in the form in which it is presented: “Après avoir placé [mon système des idées] dans la sphère du mythe, je dois l’introduire dans la sphère de l’histoire; l’ordre chronologique voulait que la synthèse poétique d’*Orphée* précédât l’analyse philosophique de la *Formule générale*”.³⁹ Myth and history clarify each other by expressing the same ideal course of plebeian evolution: “L’histoire éclaire le mythe; et le mythe, mieux connu, explique à son tour l’histoire”.⁴⁰ History reveals plebeian evolution as the underlying direction of history, and, the key to mythology revealed, mythology demonstrates the operation of social evolution in the remote past from which no historical evidence survives.

³⁶ “[I]l vous parle d’initiation sans vous initier à rien . . .” Alexandre Erdan, *La France mystique*, 2 vols. (Amsterdam: Meijer, 1858), 2:85. See also Herbert J. Hunt, *The Epic in Nineteenth-Century France* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1941), 88 and Léon Cellier, *L’Épopée humanitaire et les grands mythes romantiques* (Paris: Société d’enseignement Supérieur, 1971), 129. Busst defends Ballanche from this charge, though on grounds other than what follows, in “The Message of Ballanche’s Orpheus” in *Romance Studies* 10 (1987): 23.

³⁷ Frank Paul Bowman speaks of this process as “desymbolization”. Bowman, “Symbol and Desymbolizing” in *French Romanticism: Intertextual and Interdisciplinary Readings* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1990), 161.

³⁸ Cf. George Sand’s belief that the end of symbols was near. See Yves Vadé, *L’Enchantement littéraire: Écriture et magie de Chateaubriand à Rimbaud* (Paris: Gallimard, 1990), 245.

³⁹ Ballanche, “Formule générale. Premier fragment. Prologue” in *Revue de Paris* 2 (1829): 140.

⁴⁰ Ballanche, “Formule générale. Premier fragment. Prologue” in *Revue de Paris* 2 (1829): 145.

The full significance of the French Revolution for Roman history seems to have become apparent to Ballanche only during his travels in Italy in 1823–1825. “Je suis confondu d’étonnement lorsque je viens à penser qu’une histoire si souvent examinée, si souvent discutée, reste encore complètement à faire”, he wrote to Récamier from Tuscany early in 1824.⁴¹ The year before he had sounded a similar theme in a letter from Naples: “Il me semble à présent que j’ai une destinée à accomplir. Cette destinée, je l’avais déjà entrevue plusieurs fois en France; depuis que je suis en Italie, elle m’apparaît d’une manière un peu moins confuse. La vieille Europe a besoin de quelques apôtres comme moi”.⁴² That Ballanche saw his mission more clearly in Italy suggests that *Formule générale* represents not simply the interpretation of the history of Rome in light of the French Revolution, but that his study of Roman history helped him to understand the Revolution itself. Nevertheless, the Revolution remains the historiographical key to Ballanche’s thought; even the history of Rome was an adjunct to his quest to comprehend the Revolution within the providential order. *Formule générale*, moreover, is not merely the history of Rome; it is, as its full title proclaims, “l’histoire de tous les peuples, appliquée à l’histoire du peuple romain”. Roman history is archetypal because it manifests in the clearest possible manner the struggle between the two principles revealed by the French Revolution to be the content of all history:

toute la vie du peuple romain s’est exercée sous la condition de l’antagonisme de deux principes: le principe stationnaire qui a résidé dans la forte constitution du patriciat, et qui est tout l’Orient; le principe évolutif et progressif, qui a formé le plébéianisme, et qui est tout l’Occident.⁴³

Ballanche’s privileging of the history of early Rome as archetypal recalls the attempts made by the French Revolutionaries to legitimate their actions through identifying themselves with the heroes of Republican Rome.⁴⁴ Yet, there is a crucial difference in the manner

⁴¹ Ballanche to Récamier, 1 March 1825, in Agnès Kettler, *Lettres de Ballanche à Madame Récamier, 1812–1845* (Paris: Champion, 1996), 544. See *OC*, 4:164 for Ballanche’s dismissal of contemporary interpretations of Roman history.

⁴² Ballanche to Récamier, 29 January 1824, in Kettler, *Lettres de Ballanche à Madame Récamier*, 534.

⁴³ Ballanche, “Formule générale. Premier fragment. Prologue” in *Revue de Paris* 2 (1829): 151.

⁴⁴ See Carol Blum, *Rousseau and the Republic of Virtue: The Language of Politics in the French Revolution* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1986) and Ronald Paulson, *Representations of Revolution, 1789–1820* (New Haven: Yale UP, 1983).

in which Roman history was appropriated in the two cases: the Revolutionaries simply interpreted their actions as a repetition of Roman history; Ballanche re-interpreted Roman history in terms of the law of social evolution revealed by the Revolution itself.

Just as the subject of *Orphée* is the birth of the civil world, so the subject of *Formule générale* is the history of the civil world: "J'espère en effet y présenter le tableau exact du monde civil depuis sa naissance jusqu'à son plus haut développement de force et de puissance; c'est l'initiation imposée par la Providence; c'est la destinée elle-même s'expliquant par les faits accomplis".⁴⁵ We are now in a position to understand in what sense *Formule générale* stands outside the epic trilogy of *Palingénésie sociale* as supporting evidence. *Formule générale*, by tracing the social evolution of the Roman people, for which positive historical evidence is plentiful, demonstrates and thereby supports the same law of social evolution depicted in the three purely allegorical works.

The past, for Ballanche, is not inert. Indeed, because it becomes progressively more intelligible as the unfolding of social evolution reveals more and more of the law that governs history, the past is not truly past; in some sense, the past is still a part of our present:

Ainsi l'homme règne sur le passé, et le gouverne; le passé, pour l'esprit, est encore le présent, plus modifiable même que le présent. Nous faisons le présent à notre insu; notre intelligence achève le passé. Le passé n'est irrévocable que pour Dieu, parce qu'il n'a rien à y découvrir: il l'a vu par la présience, avant qu'il ne fût accompli, au lieu qu'il se développe incessamment pour l'homme.⁴⁶

Humanity gradually discovers itself through the progressive unfolding in history of the meaning of history. The meaning of an event, in other words, is only apparent when seen in the context of the whole of history, and history itself is fully intelligible only when its end is known. History is social evolution seen in retrospect. Similarly, once the end of history is known, the future is in some sense known as well: "Les données de l'histoire servent à compléter l'histoire: ainsi, en appliquant à l'avenir le principe de la loi qui a réglé le passé, nous parvenons à concevoir l'avenir".⁴⁷ Ballanche, of course, believes that the end of history as the culmination of plebeian evolution has been revealed in the French Revolution. It is in light of the notion

⁴⁵ *OC*, 4:19.

⁴⁶ Ballanche, "Formule générale. Premier fragment. Prologue" in *Revue de Paris* 2 (1829): 153. See also *OC*, 6:288.

⁴⁷ *OC*, 4:76.

that one must know the end of history in order to understand history that Ballanche's description to Récamier of the true historian must be read: "Le véritable historien est donc, dans toute la force du terme, un prophète du passé. Le don de prophétie ou de divination s'applique donc en effet au passé comme à l'avenir. Si vous étiez métaphysicienne, je vous dirais que, dans ce cas, la prophétie est un synthèse".⁴⁸ Applied to Joseph de Maistre, the phrase *prophète du passé* criticizes his refusal to recognize the progressive nature of society. Here, Ballanche is using the phrase to emphasize the unity of past, present, and future (cf. the unity of *Orphée*, *Elégie*, and *Ville des Expiations*) in the unfolding of the law of plebeian evolution. Prophecy, in good Hebrew Bible fashion, indicates for Ballanche not so much prescience of specific events as the revelation of God's intentions for humanity. *Palingénésie sociale* is prophecy because it proclaims the providential order underlying history:

L'homme est donc tenu de devenir le passé, de le reconstruire d'après l'idée qui dort dans les monuments, d'après la loi générale qui se dévoile à chaque crise palingénésique: il emploie à cette dévination [sic] la même faculté qui lui fait pressentir l'avenir. Le présent n'existe qu'à la condition du passé et de l'avenir, ou plutôt n'est que la mystérieuse assimilation du passé et de l'avenir.⁴⁹

Ballanche himself encapsulated his attitude toward historical evidence in a letter to Récamier written from Naples in early 1824:

Je regarde sans appuyer le regard, sans chercher à me rendre compte à moi-même. Les impressions que je reçois s'associent toujours aux pensées que j'ai déjà, aux pensées qui sont en moi, et ne peuvent se détacher pour être dites. Ces ruines, ces paysages et cette mer et ce ciel deviennent de la philosophie, une sorte de poésie: c'est la voix du passé, c'est la voix de l'avenir. Avec l'aspect de Venise, j'ai fait l'Egypte; avec l'aspect de Cumes, je ferai les antres de la Samothrace. Ce que je vois ici, ce que j'ai vu ailleurs, ce que je sais, ce que je devine, c'est toujours l'ensemble et la suite des destinées humaines.⁵⁰

"That which I see here, I have seen elsewhere". In this phrase Ballanche captures the essence of allegorical history: since events point beyond themselves to the underlying order of plebeian evolution, the

⁴⁸ Ballanche to Récamier, 1 March 1825, in Kettler, *Lettres de Ballanche à Madame Récamier*, 544.

⁴⁹ *OC*, 6:288–289.

⁵⁰ Ballanche to Récamier, 5 February 1824, in Kettler, *Lettres de Ballanche à Madame Récamier*, 538.

variety and differentiation of history are only superficial inasmuch as all events point to the same underlying order; signifiers vary, as we say nowadays, the signified does not. Twenty months before his death Ballanche reiterated his metaphysical conception of the role of a historian: "Un grand prophète est un *historien idéal*. Un historien idéal est le véritable historien dans la sphère la plus élevée de l'intelligence des choses humaines."⁵¹

In a letter to Récamier written during his trip to Naples with Dugas-Montbel, Ballanche, while remarking once again on the deep affinity he feels for Sicily, concedes that he hopes to visit Sicily not in order to search for inspiration but to confirm the truth of the ideas he has already intuited.⁵² *Prolégomènes* confirms that the insufficiency of the scientific disciplines of archeology and geology to recreate the primitive erudition on which *Orphée* is based means that Ballanche has had to trust his intuitions:

Ainsi donc, si j'ai dû désespérer d'atteindre à l'intimité de la science, j'ai été loin de renoncer à l'espoir de pénétrer dans l'intimité des choses. Je n'ai point cherché à restituer des monuments d'histoire ou de poésie d'après des médailles effacées, d'après des ruines de ruines, d'après des conjectures ou des documents incertains; j'ai évoqué directement l'esprit des traditions anciennes, et je me suis familiarisé quelques instants avec cette sorte de vie nécromancienne.⁵³

German Pietists developed a notion of history as prophecy remarkably similar to Ballanche's in the first three-quarters of the eighteenth century.⁵⁴ The Pietists, who searched history for correlates to the prophecies contained in Scripture, were much more closely tied to the Bible than was Ballanche, who discovered his law of history extra-Scripturally in history itself. The affinity between Ballanche and the Pietists is not so much a question of direct influence on Ballanche, although there is always the possibility via Bredin or Fabre d'Olivet, as of a common theological conception of history. For both, history is the unfolding of the divine plan of redemption; once this plan is known, history becomes prophecy.

⁵¹ Ballanche to Hautefeuille, 18 September 1845, in Alfred Marquiset, *Ballanche et Mme. d'Hautefeuille. Lettres inédites* (Paris: Champion, 1912), 243.

⁵² Ballanche to Récamier, 25 January 1824, in Kettler, *Lettres de Ballanche à Madame Récamier*, 527.

⁵³ *OC*, 4:86.

⁵⁴ Ernst Benz, *Les Sources mystiques de la philosophie romantique allemande* (Paris: Vrin, 1987 [1968]), 45.

Confirmation of the subordination of Ballanche's Italian researches to the law governing history that the Revolution had revealed to him may be found in the collections of notes extant among Ballanche's papers at the Bibliothèque Municipale de Lyon. Dossiers twenty-one and twenty-two contain well over 200 sets of notes on ancient subjects and works of Roman and Greek history, either, for the most part, by classical authors or commenting on them.⁵⁵ These notebooks represent the raw material of *Formule générale*, though they also cover material corresponding to the largely written but still unpublished *Orphée*.⁵⁶ The notes take the form of a careful reading of a given text, including page references. They do not, however, attempt to reproduce exactly an author's views; rather, they pick out ideas, customs, figures, etc. relevant to *Palingénésie sociale*. In sum, the immense erudition represented by the notebooks, like Ballanche's philology, is not a disinterested search for historical truth, but a ransacking of all available sources for evidence from antiquity to support his theory of plebeian evolution. The hand-writing in the vast majority of these notebooks, let us observe, is not Ballanche's. The notebooks were, in fact, the work of one Fossati, a secretary employed by Ballanche. Ballanche himself annotated some, though by no means all, of the notebooks. A. J. L. Busst, in arguing for Fossati as a collaborator rather than merely a secretary,⁵⁷ has over-emphasized Fossati's creative role: the notes themselves simply paraphrase selected passages from the various works, and there is no evidence (manuscripts, letters, allusions by Ballanche, or, for that matter, Fossati) demonstrating that Fossati contributed anything more than drudge-work. Moreover, since the research was undertaken not in order to discover new theories but to unearth evidence for the universal law of plebeian evolution already revealed by the French Revolution, Ballanche had no need of a collaborator. Fossati's task, as Busst himself acknowledges, was

⁵⁵ BML MSS 1806–1810, Dossier 21, "Notes sur diverses questions d'antiquité et d'histoire", consists of two sets of notes, one of six subjects, the other lists 105 subjects but seventeen are missing. Dossier 22, "Extraits et analyses de divers auteurs anciens", contains 116 notebooks; eleven and 113 are missing, and three are unnumbered.

⁵⁶ Occasionally one finds notes from Ballanche to himself regarding the significance of one or other passage for *Orphée* and a reminder to refer to it in the section of *Prolégomènes* to be devoted to it. In the margin of notebook sixty-eight (on Clement of Alexandria), for example, one reads: "Ceci à noter pour les prolégomènes d'*Orphée*, où j'ai beaucoup de choses à ajouter".

⁵⁷ A. J. L. Busst, "Ballanche et Fossati: Une collaboration mystérieuse" in *Rivista di Letteratura Moderna e Comparata* 19 (1966): 279–303.

to mine classical and scholarly works for evidence supporting the guiding principle of *Palingénésie sociale*.

Ballanche among the mythographers

This section will underscore what is unique about Ballanche's philosophy of history by demonstrating the distinctiveness of its attendant mythography against several contemporary approaches to the study of religion: Catholic Traditionalism; German philosophical mythography; the Oriental Renaissance; Egyptomania; and the debates over desymbolization.

Catholic Traditionalist mythographies react against Enlightenment ideas of natural religion, whether Charles de Brosses and Nicolas-Antoine Boulanger's immoral and cruel affront to human reason or Jean-Jacques Rousseau's interior faith arising from the innate goodness of uncorrupted human beings. Louis de Bonald's history of religions, a corollary of the Traditionalist principles of a universal primitive revelation and its transmission through language, begins with a recification of the idea of natural religion. "Nature" comes from the verb *naître* "to be born": "un être naît pour une fin, et avec les moyens d'y parvenir; cette fin et ces moyens composent sa nature".⁵⁸ Bonald's natural religion is thus the knowledge of God and of the immortality of the soul revealed to earliest humanity through language. It is supernatural in that it does not derive from the innate capacities of humanity (the error of the Enlightenment), but it is natural in that it is the religion appropriate to the earliest stage of human development.⁵⁹

If all peoples of the world receive through primitive revelation and language the same natural religion, what accounts for the diverse beliefs and practices encountered by missionaries and travellers? Bonald's answer is the corrupting power of the imagination. Possessing the idea of God through natural religion, humanity began to attribute human characteristics to God in order to explain divine activity: the "absurdities of idolatry and the abominations of its worship" arise from the attribution to God of human senses, passions, weaknesses, and appearance. Idolatry and paganism are corruptions of natural religion. In the extreme case of the Greeks, corruption led to atheism.⁶⁰

⁵⁸ Bonald, *Législation primitive* in *Oeuvres complètes*, 3 vols. (Paris: Migne, 1859), 1:1126.

⁵⁹ Bonald, *Législation primitive* in *Oeuvres complètes*, 1:1165, 1171.

⁶⁰ Bonald, *Législation primitive* in *Oeuvres complètes*, 1:1177–1178.

For the proper development of natural religion one must look to Judaism and Christianity. The Judaic religion, Bonald says, is only natural religion developed in a manner appropriate to the needs of a particular society and the character of a certain people. Christianity is the Judaic religion fully developed, perfected, and fulfilled so that it is appropriate for all societies, for all peoples, for all times.⁶¹ All the fundamentals of Christianity, especially those relating to Christ, were implicitly contained in natural religion, where the mediator was announced, and figured in Judaism, where the mediator was expected.⁶² Bonald understands natural religion, Judaism, and Christianity as the three sequential ages of monotheism, or the religion of the unity of God.

Bonald's history of religions is constructed on an organic theory of development: "la religion naturelle est le germe de la religion judaïque, et la religion chrétienne ou révélée est le développement, le perfectionnement, l'accomplissement de la religion judaïque".⁶³ The metaphor of germination is crucial to Bonald's understanding of development: "la vérité est, comme l'homme et comme la société, un germe qui se développe par la succession des temps et des hommes, toujours ancienne dans son commencement, toujours nouvelle dans ses développements successifs".⁶⁴ Truth can both develop and be eternal because for Bonald, as for the scholastics from whom he derived the image, a seed can develop in only one way, the way intrinsically determined by its final cause.⁶⁵ Traditionalism interprets history, including the history of religions, as the progressive unfolding of a divinely pre-ordained pattern.

For Lamennais, as for Bonald, the Traditionalist theory of language implies a primitive revelation. But whereas Bonald's argument that the history of religions demonstrates the existence of the universal primitive religion rests almost entirely on logical reasoning and is rarely supported with historical evidence, Lamennais devotes the entire third and fourth volumes of the *Essai sur l'indifférence en matière de religion* to compiling historical evidence for its existence.⁶⁶ Lamennais

⁶¹ Bonald, *Théorie du pouvoir* in *Oeuvres complètes*, 1:523.

⁶² Bonald, *Législation primitive* in *Oeuvres complètes*, 1:1233.

⁶³ Bonald, *Théorie du pouvoir* in *Oeuvres complètes*, 1:482.

⁶⁴ Bonald, *Législation primitive* in *Oeuvres complètes*, 1:1199–1200.

⁶⁵ George Boas, *French Philosophies of the Romantic Period* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1925), 73.

⁶⁶ Jean-René Derré, *Lamennais, ses amis et le mouvement des idées à l'époque romantique (1824–1834)* (Paris: Klincksieck, 1962), 63.

ransacks the reports of missionaries and travellers, treatises by classical authors, Church Fathers, and modern authors in support of a Bonaldian history of religions. There is a natural religion, or universal primitive revelation, that while conforming to the needs of peoples in the early stages of development contains eternal religious truths.⁶⁷ Natural religion is corrupted into idolatry by human imagination, fear, and pride.⁶⁸ Lamennais, too, singles out the Greeks for criticism. While idolatry is an error of the heart, Greek rationalism is an error of the spirit that weakens the traditions by substituting individual judgement for faith and *sensus communis*. Idolatry merely corrupts the traditions and the social order that rests on them, but rationalism destroys the traditions and with them all possibility of social order.⁶⁹ (Cf. Joseph de Maistre's filiation of the French Revolution to Enlightenment rationalism and Protestant individualism). Lamennais argues that the spread of idolatry led God to make a second revelation, the Mosaic revelation to the Hebrews, which clarified the primitive revelation, outlawed idolatry, and openly promised the coming of a Mediator. The third and final revelation, the coming of Christ, fulfils and perfects the true religion preserved and transmitted in the first two ages of monotheism.

Lamennais explicitly cautions that Judaism and Christianity do not represent new religions, but are developments of the original primitive revelation. For Lamennais, as for Bonald, development means movement toward a preordained end: just as the seed becomes a tree and children grow into adults, so true religion develops across the centuries.⁷⁰ Unity is the corollary of the Traditionalist conception of development: there has been only one true religion in the world since earliest times (paganisms are corruptions of true religion, not independent religions).⁷¹ And since Christianity is the fulfilment of the one true religion, the Christian truths must have been present in natural religion as the plant is present in the seed. Conversely, Christianity must be both as old as the world and the universal religion of humanity:

quand nous parlons du christianisme, on ne doit pas arrêter son esprit aux temps écoulés depuis l'incarnation du Verbe divin, mais il faut

⁶⁷ Lamennais, *Essai sur l'indifférence en matière de religion*, 4 vols., in *Oeuvres complètes*, 12 vols. (Paris: Daubrée et Cailleux, 1836–1837), 3:9–11.

⁶⁸ Lamennais, *Essai sur l'indifférence* in *Oeuvres complètes*, 3:58–63.

⁶⁹ Lamennais, *Essai sur l'indifférence* in *Oeuvres complètes*, 3:45–46.

⁷⁰ Lamennais, *Essai sur l'indifférence* in *Oeuvres complètes*, 3:140–141.

⁷¹ Lamennais, *Essai sur l'indifférence* in *Oeuvres complètes*, 3:365.

embrasser la suite entière de la religion, avant aussi bien qu'après Jésus-Christ.⁷²

Ballanche welcomed these mythographies as confirmation of his own views on the unity of religions based on the transmission of Tradition. But, just as he criticized the political views of the Catholic Traditionalists for ignoring social progress, so he criticized their mythographies for failing to understand that the content of the Tradition to which they bear witness is the law of plebeian evolution.

Pierre Renauld has attributed Ballanche's rapprochement of myth and history to the combined influence of Vico and Friedrich Creutzer, arguing that Vico's *symbolisme historique* tempered Creutzer's *symbolisme mystique*.⁷³ Vico, as we have seen, undoubtedly influenced Ballanche's historiography, though more as confirmation than primary inspiration. The possibility of significant influence from Creutzer or other German Idealist mythographers is more problematic. Renauld concedes that Ballanche had no direct contact with Creutzer, but argues that even though the first volume of J.-D. Guigniaut's French translation of the *Symbolik und Mythologie* did not appear until 1825,⁷⁴ and though Ferdinand d'Eckstein did not begin promoting Creutzer's ideas in *Le Catholique* until 1826, Ballanche must have known its content through numerous friends who participated in the Oriental Renaissance. Indeed, though Creutzer is not cited in *Palingénésie sociale*, Ballanche was familiar with his ideas through the works of F. W. J. von Schelling, Sergiei Ouvaroff, Adolphe Pictet, and perhaps Benjamin Constant.⁷⁵ Further, since Ballanche is known to have bought the second volume of Guigniaut's translation in 1835,⁷⁶ we may assume that he had at least some familiarity with the first volume.

⁷² Lamennais, *Essai sur l'indifférence* in *Oeuvres complètes*, 3:28–29.

⁷³ Pierre Renauld, "Ballanche et Creutzer: Mythe et Symbole" in *Revue de littérature comparée* (1975): 591–623.

⁷⁴ Joseph-Daniel Guigniaut's *Religions de l'antiquité, considérées principalement dans leurs formes symboliques et mythologiques*, 4 vols. (Paris: 1825–1851) was more than a translation of the *Symbolik*; Guigniaut completely recast Creutzer's work, and appended to it relevant works of other scholars that had appeared since 1812.

⁷⁵ Ballanche cites Schelling's *On the Deities of Samothrace* (1815), Ouvaroff's *Essai sur les mystères d'Eleusis* (1815), and Pictet's *Du culte des Cabires chez les anciens Irlandais* (1824) in *Prolégomènes* and "Première Addition aux Prolégomènes". Constant read Creutzer as early as 1811 and material from *Symbolik* appears in his *De la Religion* (1824–1831). See also A. J. L. Busst, "Ballanche and the Trinity" in *Modern Language Review* 56 (1961): 85–91.

⁷⁶ According to a note preserved at the Musée de Gadagne in Lyon. See *VE*, 191 n. 135.

Friedrich Creutzer (1771–1858) was Professor of classical philology and ancient history at Heidelberg and a scholar of Asian mythologies and languages. He studied Schelling's philosophy of nature (of his Jena period) and, together with his friend Joseph von Görres, attempted to fill out Schelling's transcendental metaphysics, in which nature and history are manifestations of the Absolute in matter and time, with the positive content of the history of religions.⁷⁷

Görres' *Mythengeschichte der asiatischen Welt* (1810) presents the history of religions as a progressive separation of humanity from Spirit. Görres identifies the original auto-revelation of Spirit, the primitive religion of humanity, as a pure monotheism taught by the sages of ancient India. Over time the primitive monotheism has progressively degraded into the diverse beliefs, rituals, languages, and doctrines of the world's religions. While his story is a tragedy of fall and separation, Görres believes that the languages, mythologies, and religions of all peoples preserve remnants of the primitive revelation of Spirit and that these remnants are recoverable for modern humanity through a hermeneutic of myth.⁷⁸

The historical framework of Creutzer's widely-read *Symbolik und Mythologie der alten Völker, besonders der Griechen* (1810–1812) is Görres' diffusionist account of a pure Indian monotheism successively corrupted into polytheistic mythologies, barely discernible traces of which remain embedded the various mythologies and religions of the world. Creutzer, however, modifies Görres' history of religions on the philosophical level by privileging symbol over myth. According to Creutzer, the original auto-revelation of Spirit took symbolic form; symbols preserve the wondrous primal union of Spirit and matter (Nature) by holding the infinite and finite, the spiritual and transient, in indivisible unity. Symbols are both radiant and full of significance, and suggestive and dark, requiring further interpretation. Myth provides explanation of, or commentary on, symbols. Thus the symbolic or direct, mystical contemplation of Spirit precedes and transcends the indirect, narrated stories that utilize human action and history to convey spiritual truths. The result is a symbolic mythography, in which myths both contain and mask esoteric religious wisdom and pure

⁷⁷ Thomas F. O'Meara, *Romantic Idealism and Roman Catholicism: Schelling and the Theologians* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1982), 52–57.

⁷⁸ Burton Feldman and Robert D. Richardson, *The Rise of Modern Mythology, 1680–1860* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1972), 381–383.

Spirit. On the historical level, Creutzer describes how the pure primitive spirituality of India spread to all other ancient peoples through the work of wandering Indian priests. Because, however, these peoples proved to be ignorant and incapable of grasping the purely symbolic religion, the priests provided illustrative stories—myths, rites, mystery cults—to convey the content of the symbols. In Greece, for example, the symbolic monotheism of India was distorted by the ignorant but imaginative Greeks into their crude polytheistic mythology. Yet, even here the original Indian religion was not altogether lost because the guardians of the Greek Mystery religions preserved in their esoteric doctrines the pure symbolic teachings of the Indians. Creutzer claimed to have discovered traces of this primitive teaching in the cult of the Orphics and the Mysteries of Eleusis and the Samothracian Kabiri.⁷⁹

Ballanche accepted a diffusionist model of the history of religions, and he places a remarkably similar accusation of Greek distortion of primitive myth in the mouth of an Egyptian priest in Book VI of *Orphée*.⁸⁰ Renauld provides a thorough list of correspondences between Creutzer and Ballanche. Yet, if the machinery of Ballanche's mythography is reminiscent of Creutzer's we must conclude that Ballanche's interpretation of mythology is quite different. Rather than an original pure monotheism the content Ballanche discovers in myth is the law of plebeian evolution. Ballanche may have borrowed certain details from Creutzer, almost certainly through intermediaries, but their basic similarities, particularly the diffusionist model, were common to the era and do not amount to proof that Ballanche depended heavily on Creutzer. Even the criticism of Greek distortion of primitive teaching may be found both in Catholic Traditionalists and, spoken by an Egyptian priest and introduced with the very phrase used by Ballanche ("Vous autres Grecs . . ."), in Fabre d'Olivet.⁸¹

Schelling (1775–1854), whom Ballanche mentions by name in "Première Addition aux *Prolégomènes*", seems at first to be a more likely influence on Ballanche's mythography than Creutzer. From about 1806 Schelling's metaphysical thinking reflects his reading of

⁷⁹ Feldman and Richardson, *The Rise of Modern Mythology*, 387–389. It is Creutzer's privileging of symbol over myth that interested C. G. Jung, who read *Symbolik* around 1909.

⁸⁰ *OC*, 6:52.

⁸¹ Fabre d'Olivet, *Histoire philosophique du genre humain* (Paris: 1824; reprinted Paris: l'Age d'homme, 1974), 1:310.

Boehme and Oetinger and his discussions with the Munich theosoph Franz von Baader. The theosophical influence, particularly the Boehmism account of the nature of God and of creation as a process of divine self-manifestation and self-actualization, is clearly discernible in *The Ages of the World* (1811–1813, published posthumously). Here Schelling undertakes a logical analysis of the ontological relations that constitute the eternal process that is God—Oetinger's *ens manifestativum sui* (see Chapter Thirteen). God's eternal nature, as the archetype of sequential time, constitutes the past; sequential time, the medium for God's self-revelation, is the present; and the return of all things to God is the future. Past, present, and future—the three ages of the world—are constituted by God's own nature and radical freedom.⁸² The later Schelling, in short, interprets history and nature as the development, or self-actualization, of the pre-existent divine nature. Schelling elaborated his analysis of the divine nature into the *Potenzenlehre*, or theory of the three Potencies, which he also called his “negative philosophy”.⁸³

Because the development of the actualized Potencies—the life of God—is the historical process itself (and Nature), the Potencies point beyond themselves toward a domain of knowledge capable of empirical verification. That is, the dynamic structure of God's eternal nature is discernible in history, above all the history of religions (since religions explicitly address themselves to Spirit). Hence, Schelling, who in his Jena period had considered Görres' and Creutzer's interest in the history of religions a waste of time, now became convinced of the philosophical content of the positive religions. Beginning with the treatise, *On the Deities of Samothrace* (1815), and continuing through his “historico-critical” studies of mythology and religion comprising the *Philosophy of Mythology* (1827) and *Philosophy of Revelation* (1829, both published posthumously in 1854), Schelling attempted a comprehensive analysis of the history of religions as empirical verification of the ontological categories deduced in his negative philosophy. These studies, Schelling's “positive philosophy”, constitute a theogony, or narrative of the life of God revealed in and through the world process.⁸⁴

⁸² Robert F. Brown, *The Later Philosophy of Schelling: The Influence of Boehme on the Works of 1809–1815* (Lewistown: Bucknell UP, 1977), 270–271.

⁸³ On the theory of the Potencies, see Edward Allen Beach, *The Potencies of God(s): Schelling's Philosophy of Mythology* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1994), 111–146.

⁸⁴ Brown, *The Later Philosophy of Schelling*, 259–260.

On the Deities of Samothrace interprets the Samothracian Kabiri as symbolizing a rising three-fold movement from a state of ignorance of Spirit, through magic, or the first attempts to express Spirit in material form, to absolute Spiritual freedom.⁸⁵ In Schelling's more detailed analysis of the religions of the ancient world in *Philosophy of Mythology* the religious history of humanity begins with monotheism. This early monotheism, however, is not a true revelation of the divine nature but rather the expression of the undifferentiated, unreflective life of the early humans. Polytheism arises as a release from, and an elevation above, undifferentiation; the multiplicity of its gods mirrors humanity's increasing sense of its own differentiation and thus of its freedom. Polytheistic humanity advances through ascending levels of consciousness. The mythologies themselves bear witness to the progressive nature of polytheism: one god succeeds and prepares for another, each in turn being higher than the last, as in the Greek sequence of Ouranos, Kronos, and Zeus. The *Philosophy of Mythology* interprets the great mythological systems of Egypt, Greece, and India as the restoration to consciousness of the constituents of the "past"; that is, God's eternal nature. Myth, however, while it intuitively divine unity and ultimate spiritual harmony, is incapable of fully expressing human freedom. For this, revelation is required. *Philosophy of Revelation* identifies Judaism as the transitional phase from mythology to revelation; its disclosure of the person of the Father is the first fulfilment of mythological anticipation. Yet, while Judaism signals the end of myth, it is incomplete revelation because the Son must still appear as man to actualize the truth. Only with Christianity, or the personal appearance of God in history as the Son, is revelation fully achieved. In his Munich lectures (1827–1841) Schelling sketched the future completion of the actualization of the divine life in history and the definitive restoration of fallen consciousness and of all being to communion with God in the age of the Spirit, which will be the end of history.⁸⁶

Claude-Julien Bredin, that walking compendium of the religious speculations of the German Romantics and their Illuminist sources, wrote excitedly to Ballanche in January 1823 urging him to read a

⁸⁵ Robert F. Brown, *Schelling's Treatise on "The Deities of Samothrace"* (Missoula: Scholars Press, 1974), 47–48.

⁸⁶ Feldman and Richardson, *The Rise of Modern Mythology*, 318–319; Brown, *Schelling's Later Philosophy*, 260–261.

recent translation of *On the Deities of Samothrace*,⁸⁷ perceptively noting that “tu y verras de singulières confirmations de la doctrine profonde de mon Boehme”.⁸⁸ Ballanche evidently read the article. The account of the death of the Samothracian Sibyl in Book III of *Orphée* strongly recalls Schelling’s law of violence, whereby destruction is necessary for the accomplishment of becoming. That the birth of a new order requires the death of the old has, of course, been one of Ballanche’s basic doctrines since *Institutions sociales*, but the association with Samothrace certainly suggests Schelling. Other than this, however, Ballanche does not seem to have adopted Schelling’s ideas. He mentions Schelling in the “Première Addition aux *Prolégomènes*” only to appropriate loosely his reflections on the magical chain of the Kabiri in order to refute in passing Charles de Brosses on the origin of fetishism.⁸⁹ Even points of suggestive approximation—such as the common identification of the Greek sequence of divinities as the expression of the unfolding of a teleological history of religions—prove on closer examination to operate within distinct systems. The Ouranos-Kronos-Zeus sequence illustrates for Schelling the progressive restoration to consciousness of the divine nature among the peoples of antiquity. Ballanche’s sequence of Saturn-Jupiter-Bacchus illustrates the progression of social orders in the ancient world according to the law of social evolution.

In general regarding the various German mythographers, while acknowledging that Ballanche had some knowledge of their ideas through Bredin and Germanophile friends such as Degérando and Camille Jordan as well as Germaine de Staël’s *De l’Allemagne*, one must keep three points in mind. One, Ballanche did not read German; two, many key works were translated only after *Palingénésie sociale* was conceived and largely written; and three, most of the ideas common to Ballanche and the Germans were available through other sources, either Graeco-Roman or contemporary French, more accessible to Ballanche. The ideas of Creutzer, Schelling, and others, provided, if anything, ornamentation to rather than the basic structure of *Palingénésie sociale*.

The affinities among the mythographies of Catholic Traditionalists,

⁸⁷ Schelling, “Les Dieux du Samothrace” in the *Bibliothèque universelle* 20 (August 1822): 319–388 and 21 (September 1822): 3–21.

⁸⁸ Bredin to Ballanche, 27 January 1823, in Claude-Julien Bredin, *Correspondance philosophique et littéraire avec Ballanche* (Paris: Boccard, 1928), 209–210.

⁸⁹ *OC*, 5:38. The passage from Schelling occurs on page 28 of Brown’s translation.

Schelling, and Ballanche result from the common grounding of their respective philosophies of history on essence-and-development models of evolution. Bonald and Lamennais located the essence of post-lapsarian humanity in a primitive revelation that unfolds in history according to a teleological developmentalism analogous to the scholastic correlation of the growth of a seed to its final cause. Schelling's philosophy of history illustrates an ideal pattern which is itself given in the very nature of the source and ground of all being. Ballanche interprets history as the unfolding of the essence of humanity in accordance with the law of social evolution revealed in the French Revolution but operative throughout history. For all, history is the unfolding in time of the metaphysical essence of humanity; for all, the empirical data of the history of religions provides corroboration for the metaphysical order underlying history and making it intelligible. Only, whereas the Catholic Traditionalists and Schelling derived their principles of historical intelligibility extra-historically from, respectively, primitive revelation and its transmission through language and a logical analysis of the pre-temporal divine nature, Ballanche derived his within the historical process from an analysis of the French Revolution. Similarly, although all emphasize suffering, the centrality of expiation within Ballanche's social palingenesis arises not from punishment for the Fall or the duality at the heart of the divine nature, but from his attempt to comprehend the horrors of history within the providential order.

Catholic Traditionalist and German Idealist mythographies meet in the person of baron Ferdinand d'Eckstein (1790–1861).⁹⁰ Eckstein, who seems to have added the title himself, was born in Copenhagen into a merchant family newly converted from Judaism to Lutheranism. He studied at the University of Heidelberg, where he absorbed the German historico-symbolic approach to the history of religions directly from Creutzer himself, learned Sanskrit, and generally threw himself into the Oriental Renaissance. Eckstein converted to Catholicism in Rome in 1809 under the influence of Friedrich Schlegel, whom he had met there and who reenforced the sense of the importance of history and philology for religious reflection that he had

⁹⁰ The basic source for Eckstein, and for this and the following paragraph, is Nicolas Burtin, *Un semeur des idées au temps de la restauration: Le baron d'Eckstein* (Paris: Bocard, 1931). See also Raymond Schwab, *The Oriental Renaissance: Europe's Rediscovery of India and the East, 1680–1880*, trans. Gene Patterson-Black and Victor Reinking (New York: Columbia UP, 1984), 259–273 and Derré, *Lamennais, ses amis*, 115–167.

already acquired from Creutzer. Eckstein arrived in France in 1816 as an administrator in the service of the King of Austria in the aftermath of the defeat of Napoleon. He soon abandoned administrative work, having become convinced that he had a mission to provide Catholicism with a philosophy of history. Eckstein settled in Paris in 1818 and henceforth devoted himself to scholarship.

From 1819 to 1822 he studied the Indic manuscripts acquired by Louis Mattieu Langlès, Curator of oriental manuscripts at the Bibliothèque Nationale, seeking to extract the primitive revelation from the most remote mythological language of antiquity. From 1823 onwards Eckstein published extensively in numerous periodicals, both scholarly and popular. Eckstein insisted on the capital importance of recently discovered Oriental texts for Western thought and the religious history of humanity, and proclaimed the study of Oriental languages and texts to be the most urgent duty of contemporary intellectuals. His passionate advocacy of Orientalism, in conversation and even bureaucratic initiatives as well as in print, earned him the nickname “baron Sanskrit”. Eckstein was also active in royalist literary circles of the 1820s; he collaborated with the likes of Charles Nodier, Victor Hugo, Abel de Rémusat, Chateaubriand, Alexandre Guiraud, and Delphine Gay on the journals *Annales de la Littérature et des Arts* and the *Drapeau Blanc*. From January 1826 to December 1829 Eckstein published his own journal, *Le Catholique*, in which he presented preliminary studies for what was to be his great synthetic work—never written—on the unity of the world’s religions. *Le Catholique*, modeled on Görres’ *Katholik* and subtitled “ouvrage périodique dans lequel on traite de l’universalité des connaissances sous le rapport de l’unité de doctrine”, was devoted to proving the existence of primitive revelation and the consequent fundamental unity of all religions.

Eckstein was acquainted with Lamennais’ work, and was in complete agreement with the Catholic Traditionalists on most points. He considered, however, that the Traditionalists had not sufficiently anchored their metaphysics in history. Lamennais, it is true, had greatly improved on Bonald in this respect; nevertheless, his dependence on historical records leaves uninvestigated most peoples of the world, above all those of remotest times. New methods capable of exploring the fullness of history are needed. Fortunately, such methods have been developed in Germany: linguistics, philology, and mythography.⁹¹

⁹¹ See the texts from *Le Catholique* in Burtin, *Un semeur des idées*, 230–235.

In *Le Catholique* Eckstein fused the historico-symbolic approach to religion of his German teachers (above all, Creutzer) and the Catholic Traditionalist approach he encountered in France. The linguistic, philological, and mythographic studies published in *Le Catholique* bear witness to the existence of a universal primitive revelation, or natural religion, that carries within itself the eternal religious truths, that is corrupted into idolatry, and that develops through Judaism to its fulfilment in Christianity.⁹²

Once again, unity and development go hand in hand:

De cette identité universelle des traditions, une conséquence s'impose, c'est que l'humanité est *une*, que la science est *une*, qu'il n'y a qu'une seule histoire de l'humanité, qu'un seul développement lui est possible, et que cette unité, en vertu de son origine divine, renferme les lois et les rapports des êtres.⁹³

For Eckstein, as for Lamennais and Bonald, the principle of unity implies that Christianity is the universal religion:

Le catholicisme étant la vérité, ne peut être la vérité éternelle et, comme telle, il doit être éternellement révélé. On a dit avec raison qu'il était vieux comme le monde. En effet, il est la religion primitivement révélée; il est la religion naturelle, fondée sur le principe de la révélation de Dieu dans l'univers et dans le genre humain.⁹⁴

To underscore the unity of religion, Eckstein refers to the religions of the ancient world as "catholicisme antérieur au catholicisme" and "christianisme antérieur".⁹⁵ The idea of an anterior Christianity is common to Catholic Traditionalists, Eckstein, and Ballanche (see Chapter Thirteen) because all in their own ways interpret the various religions of humanity as links in a single chain guaranteed by the authority of a universal Tradition. Whereas Enlightenment thinkers used the idea of natural religion to attack Christianity, philosophers of history of the Romantic period domesticated it into the service of Christian apologetics. As Ballanche himself notes, "C'est la révélation qui fait la différence entre la religion naturelle du déiste et la religion catholique du théosophe".⁹⁶

Eckstein links Ballanche directly to another strand of contemporary

⁹² Eckstein, *Le Catholique* 4 (1826): 558–559. Quoted in Burtin, 238–239.

⁹³ Eckstein, *Le Catholique* 11 (1828): 137. Quoted in Burtin, 239–240.

⁹⁴ Eckstein, *Le Catholique* 3 (1826): 133. Quoted in Burtin, 241.

⁹⁵ Eckstein, *Le Catholique* 3 (1826): 133 and 15 (1829): 183. Quoted in Burtin, 235, 241.

⁹⁶ *OC*, 4:368.

mythographic thought: the Oriental Renaissance. Since the Renaissance, *érudits* had weighed the claims of the ancient Hebrews and of the ancient Egyptians to be the original fount of culture, religion, and science for the peoples of the world. At the dawn of the Romantic period scholars discovered a new claimant: the sages of ancient India. And so the “Oriental Renaissance”, as Edgar Quinet named this movement, was born.

Eckstein was the dominant Orientalizing force in Paris in the 1820s and 1830s. He propagated, in *Le Catholique* and elsewhere, the idea that since the one and universal religious truth was given to primitive humanity as revelation not only do all religions retrain traces of this primitive revelation but the farther back one goes in a given tradition the purer—because closer to the original revelation—these traces will be. Hence, the religions of India, the most primitive religious traditions known to humanity, are our best guide to the primitive revelation. Moreover, since Christianity participates in primitive wisdom as its highest expression, Eckstein argued that the religions of India are compatible with—indeed essentially identical to—Christianity:

Mais ne sait-on pas qu’il existe, dans toutes les croyances primitives, quelques dégénérées qu’elles soient, et particulièrement dans les doctrines asiatiques, les plus voisines du berceau du genre humain, un fonds de vérités révélées de tradition, qu’on pourrait appeler le *catholicisme antérieur au catholicisme*.⁹⁷

Eckstein’s elision of Ballanche’s distinction between the general traditions and the positive religions of antiquity (see Chapter Thirteen) permits him to use the principle of religious unity to glorify the religions of India. Contemporaries labelled Eckstein’s anterior Catholicism “Indo-Christianity” or “Indo-Catholicism”. Heinrich Heine remarked that Eckstein “had rediscovered in the Indian poems not merely the mysteries of Catholicism, but the whole Catholic hierarchy as well and its struggles with secular authority”.⁹⁸ Other contemporaries, including Benjamin Constant, J.-D. Lanjuinais, and J. M. Hoëne-Wronski, denounced Eckstein’s Indo-Christianity as, variously, mysticism, theocracy, heresy, and German propaganda.⁹⁹

⁹⁷ Eckstein in *Le Catholique* 3 (1826): 171–172. Quoted in Burtin, *Un semeur des idées*, 242.

⁹⁸ Heine, *The Romantic School* (1834) in Heinrich Heine, *Selected Works*, trans. Helen M. Mustard (New York: Random House, 1973), 184.

⁹⁹ Schwab, *The Oriental Renaissance*, 269–271.

Eckstein reviewed the first volume of Ballanche's *Essais de Palingénésie sociale* in January 1828.¹⁰⁰ Though he had some kind things to say he attacked Ballanche's ideas harshly and accused him of have lost his way in his own thought. Shortly after the review appeared Ballanche was visiting the comtesse d'Hautefeuille, whom he had met a few months before and who would become a close friend after 1830. Ballanche and the comtesse chatted away the afternoon, but as the dinner hour approached his hostess grew increasingly agitated. She was expecting dinner guests, one of whom was none other than Eckstein. When she explained the situation Ballanche surprised her by asking to meet his critic. Ballanche, convinced that Eckstein had not understood his thought, was eager to set the record straight. When Eckstein arrived Ballanche welcomed him cordially and set about explaining his system in detail. Eckstein, never one to be on the receiving end of a conversation, aired his favourite ideas. No doubt they discovered that many of their hobby-horses came from the same stable. In the end Ballanche won over his critic; Eckstein apologized for his attack and asked for his friendship.¹⁰¹ They subsequently saw a great deal of each other. In the "Addition au chapitre X de l'*Essai sur les Institutions sociales*" added for the *Oeuvres* edition of 1830 Ballanche thanks Eckstein for drawing attention to his works in the later numbers of *Le Catholique*.¹⁰²

This friendship notwithstanding, we must treat with caution attempts to enrol Ballanche as a participant in the Oriental Renaissance.¹⁰³ Though Ballanche indeed honoured India as the cosmogonic cradle of the human race he also insisted that the petrification of the principle of progress had prevented the operation of social evolution in the Orient. And while Ballanche did lobby for the reprinting and popularization of the sacred books of the East he wanted them known not as documents of primitive truth but in order to generate examination and discussion of their doctrines as a necessary first step in attacking the immobility of the Orient and making it progressive.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰⁰ Eckstein, *Le Catholique* 9 (1828): 93–99.

¹⁰¹ Marquiset, *Ballanche et Mme. d'Hautefeuille*, 11–12.

¹⁰² *OC*, 2:419.

¹⁰³ For example, Schwab, *The Oriental Renaissance*, 238–241; Auguste Viatte, *Les Sources occultes du romantisme* (Paris: Champion, 1928), 2:221; and Kenneth R. Stunkel, "India and the Idea of a Primitive Revelation in French Neo-Catholic Thought" in *Journal of the History of Religions* 8 (1975): 235–236.

¹⁰⁴ *OC*, 4:256–257.

Similarly, while the traditions of the Orient, like the ancient epics of the West, teach humanity about its past, Ballanche's point, just as in *Institutions sociales* where he had advocated the teaching of Oriental languages for the treasures they contain about human history and their significance for epic poetry,¹⁰⁵ is that the Orient is important as an early stage in the history of humanity, not that it at present manifests the same truths as Christianity. Religious truth is indeed universal, but successive. The Orient may be compared to feudalism in the West: both played an important role at a certain stage in social evolution but are now obsolete. India and China must throw off the idea of the Orient just as the West threw off feudalism. Ballanche's appreciation of the Orient for having fulfilled a providential mission does not make him a champion of the Orient in the manner of Eckstein any more than his appreciation of the role of the French nobility in earlier centuries makes him a champion of the Ultras.

Ballanche further distanced himself from the Indophiles of the Oriental Renaissance by his Egyptomania. Art historians distinguish Egyptomania from Egyptophilia, the love and acquisition of things Egyptian, and from simple enthusiasm for Egypt. Egyptomania refers to the appropriation and reinterpretation of Egyptian forms in new contexts so as to renew their vitality and produce new meanings.¹⁰⁶

Europe since the early modern period has succumbed to wave after wave of Egyptomania. The man most responsible for inaugurating this trend is the Jesuit scholar Athanasius Kircher (1601–1680). In his monumental *Oedipus Aegyptiacus* (1652–1654) Kircher presented a Neoplatonic-Hermetic interpretation of the religion, theosophy, and philosophy of Egypt grounded on his claim to have decoded the hieroglyphs. Kircher believed that the hieroglyphs correspond to religious or cosmological ideas, themselves identical to those set out in late Neoplatonic and Hermetic treatises. The Egyptian gods, in turn, he interpreted as the elemental forces of the cosmos emanating from an invisible divine centre and crossing four spheres in succession: the idea, the intellect, the sidereal regions, and the elemental world. Each sphere represents a spiritual level and is also united with all the others by the endless play of rising and falling forces. Drawing on massive erudition, Kircher associated each god or goddess, each

¹⁰⁵ *OC*, 2:393–395.

¹⁰⁶ Jean-Marcel Humbert, Michael Pantazzi, and Christiane Ziegler, *Egyptomania: Egypt in Western Art 1730–1930* (Ottawa: National Gallery of Canada, 1994), 21.

hieroglyph, and each artistic representation with a philosophical idea or concept. The end result depicts Egyptian religion as a highly philosophic system of cosmology and soteriology.¹⁰⁷

Kircher belongs squarely within the Renaissance version of the *prisca theologia* tradition, which holds that while Christian revelation is the final and supreme expression of divine truth all previous religions and philosophies share in it to some extent. Kircher, like many ancient theologians, identifies the wisdom of the Egyptians as the highest pre-Christian expression of divine truth and the source of the philosophies of Plato and Pythagoras. Moreover, since all wisdom participates in the same divine truth the content of Greek, Egyptian, and Christian wisdom is the same. The hieroglyphs, myths, and Hermetic books of the Egyptians, Greek mythology, Neoplatonism, and Pythagoreanism, and the teaching of the Bible and Church Fathers all point to the same universal truths.¹⁰⁸

A vision of Egypt less scholarly than Kircher's but similarly celebrating ancient Egyptian wisdom was widely disseminated by two of the most popular books of the eighteenth century. Book II of Fénelon's *Télémaque* (1699) details the instruction the young prince receives from Egyptian priests. Jean Terrasson's *Sethos, Histoire ou Vie tirée des monuments anecdotes de l'ancienne Egypte* (1731), itself strongly influenced by *Télémaque*, tells the story of the education and spiritual growth of young prince Sethos, the "Egyptian Telemachus". The novel features elaborate descriptions of the various trials, rituals, and initiations to which Sethos submits in order to ennoble his character and develop the virtues of an enlightened monarch. Terrasson presents the ultimately moral message of the work as a highly ritualized and abstract metaphysics, culminating in Sethos' solemn accession to the sacred mysteries of Isis and Osiris after long trials of initiation by fire and water.¹⁰⁹

Sethos was quickly and widely accepted as authoritative on Egyptian worship and mythology. In particular, modern speculative Freemasonry, then in its infancy, drew on the novel for the rituals associated

¹⁰⁷ Erik Iversen, "The Fate of the Egyptian Gods from the Middle Ages to the Eighteenth Century" in Yves Bonnefoy and Wendy Doniger, eds., *Mythologies*, 2 vols. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), 139–140.

¹⁰⁸ Erik Iversen, *The Myth of Egypt and its Hieroglyphs in European Tradition* (Copenhagen: Gec Gad, 1961; reprint Princeton: Princeton UP, 1993), 94.

¹⁰⁹ Iversen, "The Fate of the Egyptian Gods", 141; Iversen, *The Myth of Egypt*, 121–122.

with its so-called Egyptian rite.¹¹⁰ The harmony among Egyptomania, *Sethos*, and masonry in the eighteenth century is displayed in Mozart's *Magic Flute* (1791). The hero, Tamino, before being admitted into the world of light and truth of the initiate into the mysteries of Osiris, must undergo various ordeals and purifications by fire and water under the guidance of the high priest Sarastro, who embodies all of the virtues of Sethos' mentor. Ignaz von Born, a geologist from Vienna said to be the model for Sarastro, edited a *Journal for Freemasons*, to which he contributed a study of the mysteries of Egypt, and was master of the masonic lodge *For True Harmony*, to which Mozart and Schikaneder, the librettist of *The Magic Flute*, belonged. Schikaneder's libretto, finally, reproduces entire passages lifted directly from *Sethos*.¹¹¹

The Magic Flute was one of the last great productions of German Egyptomania. The Oriental Renaissance substituted India for Egypt as the homeland of the matchless wisdom of the ancients. In France, however, Egyptomania continued. Egypt retained the place of honour granted it by Kircher in Court de Gébél's *Le Monde primitif*. In the works of Boulanger and Delisle de Sales even Enlightenment criticism did not remove Egypt from pride of place. Among the Illuminists Fabre d'Olivet, a student of Delisle de Sales in his pre-theosophical days, believed that he had rediscovered the wisdom of the ancient initiates of Memphis. French Egyptomania, at a general cultural level, intensified around the turn of the century as a result of Napoleon's Egyptian campaign (1798–1801). A scientific expedition of about 150 scholars and scientists accompanied the military force, and while their finds, especially the Rosetta stone, revolutionized academic Egyptology, the publications issuing from the expedition fired a new round of Egyptomania in French society in general.¹¹² The fall of Napoleon in no way diminished its strength; Jean-François Champollion's obsession with deciphering the hieroglyphics may stand for the continued grip of Egypt on the French imagination.

Champollion's heroic decipherment of the hieroglyphic script in

¹¹⁰ Iversen, *The Myth of Egypt*, 121–122; Antoine Faivre, *Access to Western Esotericism* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1994), 72.

¹¹¹ Iversen, "The Fate of the Egyptian Gods", 142.

¹¹² Two major publications resulted from Bonaparte's Egyptian campaign: Dominique-Vivant Denon, *Voyage dans la Basse et la Haute Egypte pendant les Campagnes du Général Bonaparte* (Paris: 1802); and the official report: *Description de l'Egypte, ou Recueil des observations et des recherches qui ont été faites en Egypte pendant l'expédition de l'armée française*, 12 vols. (Paris: 1809–1828). Preparatory drawings for the *Description* were accessible and known several years before the 1809 publication of the first volume.

1822 firmly established Egyptology on a scientific basis and exploded the fanciful interpretations of Kircher, G  belin, and others. Artists and scholars, however, were reluctant to renounce the idea of an ancient land of justice, wisdom, and religious truth, and continued to draw on the older sources.¹¹³ Ballanche is exemplary in this respect. He ignored the sober Egyptology that emerged in the light of Champollion's work and continued to immerse himself in the speculative treatises, ancient (above all, Plutarch's *On Isis and Osiris*) and modern, on the wisdom of Egypt. (Not that, let us hasten to add, contemporaries always distinguished between scientific and speculative Egyptology. Charles Lenormant, the husband of R  camier's niece, Am  lie, slipped a summary of the doctrines of Ballanche's *Orph  e* into his account in *Le Globe* of a scientific expedition to Egypt.)¹¹⁴

The Egypt depicted in *Paling  n  sie sociale*, particularly *Orph  e* and *Ville des Expiations*, is Ballanche's social evolutionary variation on the Egypt of Kircher's *Oedipus Aegyptiacus* as it was transmitted and refined by the French Egyptomaniacal tradition of F  nelon, Terrasson, Court de G  belin, and Fabre d'Olivet. We have noted repeatedly Ballanche's admiration for F  nelon, Court de G  belin, and Fabre d'Olivet. Ren  -Pierre Colin has identified *Sethos* (reprinted in 1813 to capitalize on Empire Egyptomania) as the source of several initiatory scenes in *Ville des Expiations*.¹¹⁵ The imprint of *Sethos*, particularly Book III, is also discernible on the initiation of Orpheus in *Orph  e*, although here Ballanche has transferred some events from Orpheus to Thamyras.

A final point of contact between Ballanche and contemporary mythography that warrants comment—again because the affinity is less than it seems—is the debate in the second quarter of the nineteenth century over desymbolization or demythologization. At issue was the relationship between religion and philosophy. Victor Cousin, in *Cours de l'histoire de la philosophie* (1828) and *Histoire de la philosophie du dix-huiti  me si  cle* (1830), argued that philosophy translates into pure, rational truths the intuition of God that religion expresses in symbols; hence, the move from religion to philosophy is a process of desymbolization or demythologization. Though Cousin sought to mute his theory of desymbolization once he became commissar of philosophy

¹¹³ Humbert, Pantazzi, and Ziegler, *Egyptomania*, 312.

¹¹⁴ Lenormant, *Le Globe* 10 (4 February 1829). Cited in Juden, *Traditions orphiques et tendances mystiques*, 266.

¹¹⁵ See Ren  -Pierre Colin, "L'Initiation dans la *Ville des Expiations*" in Derr  , dir., *Dossier de la Ville des Expiation de Ballanche* (Paris: CNRS, 1981), 13–14.

during the July Monarchy, similar desymbolizing ideas (though distinct from Cousin's thought on other counts) entered France from Germany, particularly through commentaries on Hegel's philosophy and in relation to Friedrich David Strauss' *Life of Jesus* (1835; Fr. trans. 1839–1840).¹¹⁶ In the 1840s the debate over desymbolization became focussed on the school of Alexandria, where Christianity, Judaism, platonism, pythagoreanism, hermeticism, and gnosticism had flourished and intermixed. A series of works argued that the formation of Christian dogma either had or had not been influenced by Alexandrian philosophy.¹¹⁷

The syncretic philosophy of Alexandria had been a constant pre-occupation in French intellectual life since the early Restoration, and Ballanche was thoroughly familiar with its various strands. His interest in platonism and pythagoreanism was longstanding; he learned about gnosticism from his old friend, J. M. Degérando, who had made a careful study of gnosticism and Alexandrian thought in general for his history of philosophy; and as early as 1817 Ballanche discovered Hermes Trismegistus with Bredin and later gave Bredin a translation of the *Corpus Hermeticum* while keeping a copy of the Greek text for himself.¹¹⁸

Surprisingly few references to Alexandria are to be found in Ballanche's major works. In *Institutions sociales* Ballanche criticizes the Alexandrians for producing only servile imitations and commentaries on Greek literature.¹¹⁹ Elsewhere in this work, referring to the *Pymander* (a book of the *Corpus Hermeticum*), he characterizes the Alexandrian period as an era of end and renewal:

Le Pymandre, livre assez peu intelligible, attribué à Mercure mais qui paraît avoir composé dans le premiers siècles de l'église, c'est-à-dire à une époque où une foule de traditions graduellement défigurées et affaiblies finissaient, et où l'on cherchait à les faire revivre en les rattachant au christianisme.¹²⁰

¹¹⁶ Bowman, "Symbol and Desymbolizing", 158–160.

¹¹⁷ Bowman, "Symbol and Desymbolizing", 163. The most important of these works are: Jacques Matter, *Histoire de l'école d'Alexandrie* (rev. ed. 1840); J. M. Prat, *Histoire de l'éclecticisme alexandrin* (1843); Jules Simon, *Histoire de l'école d'Alexandrie* (1845); and Etienne Vacherot, *Histoire de l'école d'Alexandrie* (1846).

¹¹⁸ Viatte, *Les Sources occultes du Romantisme*, 2:217; Bredin, *Correspondance littéraire et philosophique avec Ballanche*, 33ff. and 157. See also Jacques Roos, *Aspects littéraires du mysticisme philosophique* (Strasbourg: Heitz, 1951), 354–355.

¹¹⁹ OC, 2:106.

¹²⁰ OC, 2:229–230.

One might expect Ballanche to have integrated the Alexandrian moment in the historical schema of *Palingénésie sociale*. In fact, the only references to Alexandria allude to the debasement of the primitive traditions by Alexandrian poets, philosophers, and critics.¹²¹ Only in a very late piece published in *Le Correspondant*, "Alexandrie" (1845),¹²² did Ballanche take up the place of Alexandria within the palingenetic process.

The article begins with the assertion that Alexander the Great knew that once he had conquered the world he would have to be the legislator for a new age. He also knew that his new order would have to be constructed out of two equally corrupt and degenerate peoples, Greeks and Asians (Persians), whose character, customs, and institutions were totally opposed. Alexander founded Alexandria with the intention of fusing these two peoples, thereby establishing an Orient in the West, and by mingling them rejuvenate both peoples so that out of this fusion would emerge a strong political and intellectual unity. Ballanche remarks that Alexander represents one of those moments when divine providence visibly manifests itself. Alexandrian syncretism thus goes back to the founding of the city whose purpose was to mingle peoples and their religions. Ballanche takes the opportunity to restate his principle that the history of a people is summed up in some way in the history of its founder (cf. the founding of Rome in *Orphée*): "le fondateur pose, à son insu, le principe qui est la raison d'être de ce peuple; car tout fondateur a une mission providentielle".¹²³ The old cities of Persia and Greece could not serve as Alexander's capital because a new order of things requires a new sign to represent it. A new order needs a centre where the thought of the founder can take root and develop free from the restrictions of old customs and institutions. Alexander's early death prevented the realization of political unity; yet, although Rome replaced Alexandria as the centre of political activity, Alexandria retained its intellectual mission, dominating the age in the cultural spheres of learning and art as Rome dominated militarily and politically.

While, then, Alexandria parallels the providential mission of Rome, Ballanche declines to chart out the role played by Alexandria in the

¹²¹ *OC*, 4:374, 6:286.

¹²² *Le Correspondant* had been revived in 1843 by a team of liberal Catholics that included Charles Lenormant. Ballanche most likely put together this article, his only publication after 1835, as a favour to Lenormant, Juliette Récamier's nephew-in-law.

¹²³ Ballanche, "Alexandrie" in *Le Correspondant* (10 August 1845): 426.

movement of human reason in this age of end and renewal. Instead, he turns to a critique of their intellectual labours. Since the original Greek genius of Homer and Plato derived in the first place from initiation in the sanctuaries of Egypt, Alexandrian Greeks have only completed a long pilgrimage back to their original sources of inspiration. Their remaining intellectual task is the study of ancient doctrines and mysterious traditions. Unfortunately, the scholiasts of Alexandria turned their backs on the ancient wisdom. The balance of the article repeats the criticism of Alexandrian grammarians for mutilating and disfiguring the ancient traditions through their emendations of Homer first voiced in *Institutions sociales*.

Ballanche concludes the article by observing that one might compare the exegetical labours of the Alexandrians to the work of contemporary German critics. He promises to devote a second article to several recent works on the Alexandrian school. The follow-up article was never written. Ballanche told a friend that he had been distracted by the idea of a work on Julian the Apostate, “ce triste et suprême représentant de toute la philosophie alexandrine”.¹²⁴ In fact, Ballanche had been left behind by the current polemic then raging over the Alexandrian school. While Ballanche’s theory of social palingenesis does indeed amount, as we have seen, to a version of desymbolization, it is a matter not of substituting rational concepts for theological symbols but of a shift from esotericism to exotericism. Ballanche, simply put, is an outsider to the Cousin-Hegel-Strauss debate over desymbolization. The desymbolizing ideas in *Palingénésie sociale* belong to an earlier moment in the Romantic discourse on religion.

While it is easy to multiply affinities between Ballanche’s mythography and that of a host of other contemporary mythographers, one must not lose sight beneath the common fund of early nineteenth-century theorizing about myth and religion of what is unique to Ballanche: the discernment in the history of religions of the operation of the same law of plebeian evolution revealed in the French Revolution and manifested in the history of the social institutions of the ancient world.

¹²⁴ Ballanche to Hautefeuille, 16 October 1845, in Marquiset, *Ballanche et Mme. d’Hautefeuille*, 245.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

HISTORIOSOPHY

This chapter examines the relationship of historical process to the rehabilitation of humanity from the effects of the Fall. After investigating the place of history in Illuminist thought, it argues that the philosophy of history of *Palingénésie sociale* synthesizes historical-mindedness and Illuminist reintegration in what I will call a historiosophy. It then demonstrates how Ballanche's historiosophy, through the concept of anterior Christianity, resolves the ambiguity of his earlier works regarding the status of Christ within the reintegrative process.

Illuminism and history

Jakob Boehme relates the historical life of humanity to the extra-historical cosmological moments of Creation, Fall, and Reintegration.¹ Creation, we recall, is for Boehme an ongoing and eternal emanation, while the Fall disperses primordial Adam into a material world of generation, suffering, and evil. Redemption from the Fall, or the reintegration of primordial Adam, is a process of return, by which emanated creation comes to realize its identity with the divine. The process of reintegration lies outside history. While historical events mark stages in the rehabilitatory process—the horrors of the Thirty Years' War, for example, mark the chaos immediately preceding the final restoration of humanity—they in no way effect them. History is merely the arena in which the forces of the eternal world operate; historical time is utterly overwhelmed by the eternally present drama of fall and redemption.² The only historical event that matters in the process of reintegration is the Incarnation, by which, according to

¹ This section is taken from Arthur McCalla, "Illuminism and French Romantic Philosophies of History" in Antoine Faivre and Wouter Hanegraaff, eds., *Western Esotericism and the Science of Religions* (Louvain: Peeters, 1998).

² Andrew Weeks, *German Mysticism from Hildegard of Bingen to Ludwig Wittgenstein: A Literary and Intellectual History* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1993), 180–182.

Boehme's interpretation of the Gospels, the physical world becomes saturated with spirit and historical time with eternity. Boehme calls the recognition of the eternal world latent within this world the non-historical faith, and contrasts it to the misguided historical faith that reads Scripture literally as a factual record of past events. By recognizing through the non-historical faith the presence of the eternal in time, the believer is translated from this world into the eternal one latent within it. Historical events, and therefore the historical faith, are irrelevant to the process of reintegration. Even the Incarnation is problematic because Boehme's emanationism means that divine forces are already present in the world, albeit obscured by sin, before the Incarnation.³

Boehme's eighteenth-century disciple, the Swabian Pietist pastor and natural philosopher, Friedrich Christoph Oetinger (1702–1782), conceives of God as the *ens manifestativum sui*, the Life-principle that strives from a dark original cause toward its own realization and corporealization. Divine self-realization, or theogony, means that God actualizes himself progressively in the development of life. Divine self-realization is a process of corporealization because, on the Boehmist rejection of a spirit/body dualism, Oetinger insists that in its self-actualization the divine Life moves toward an indestructible spiritualized corporeality, which, following Boehme, he calls *Leiblichkeit*, and identifies as “the end of the paths of God”.⁴

Oetinger frequently speaks of the “essence” of created things. The essence contains not only the form, but also all the potentialities and possibilities of realization of a thing.⁵ The unfolding of essences is initiated by the operation of a secret interior impulse, which Oetinger calls “the electrical fire concealed in all things”, interfused with matter at the creation of the universe. The life force inherent in this fire possesses an urge to realization at progressively higher levels of being. All of Creation, including humanity, participates in this urge to realization that does not rest until life has reached perfection in the

³ Andrew Weeks, *Boehme: An Intellectual Biography of the Seventeenth-Century Philosopher and Mystic* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1991), 36, 150. On ambiguities in the status of Christ in Boehme's thought, see 176–177.

⁴ Ernst Benz, *Evolution and Christian Hope: Man's Concept of the Future from the Early Fathers to Teilhard de Chardin*, trans. Heinz G. Frank (New York: Doubleday, 1966), 168–169; F. Ernest Stoeffler, *German Pietism during the Eighteenth Century* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1973), 113.

⁵ Ernst Benz, *Les Sources mystiques de la philosophie romantique allemande* (Paris: Vrin, 1987 [1986]), 60.

full realization of spiritual corporeality.⁶ The unfolding of essences toward full realization of the divine life is the theosophical sense of evolution. Oetinger's essence and electrical fire correspond to germ and fertilization in Bonnet's biological preformationism. Oetinger read Bonnet, and cites his works from time to time.⁷ Indeed, his major work, *Theology Drawn from the Idea of Life* (1765), attempts to restore the inner connection between the scientific and the Christian outlook of the universe severed in the contemporary philosophical systems of Newton, Leibnitz, and Christian Wolff by unifying the natural realm and the spiritual realm in a vitalist and organic theosophy.⁸ The theosophical and biological preformationist senses of evolution constructed in the eighteenth century are closely related. For both Bonnet and Oetinger, evolution signifies the development or unfolding of pre-existent essences and both constructions reconceptualize Christian teleology and soteriology. No more, however, than for Boehme do historical events matter in Oetinger's theosophy.

Martinès de Pascally's Illuminism similarly judges historical events irrelevant to the combination of prayer and theurgy by which reintegration is to be accomplished. And as in Boehme, Martinès' christology is ambiguous. Martinès recognizes a series of holy intercessors, beginning with Abel and extending through Noah and Moses to Jesus, who assist humanity in the process of reintegration. Jesus is the culmination of this series, and his religion is superior to all others. Nevertheless, though Martinès accepted that Christ incarnated the divine light, he neither conjoined the prophet Jesus and the divine Christ nor clarified the soteriological status of the Incarnation vis-à-vis, on the one hand, prayer and theurgic ritual and, on the other, previous intercessors.⁹

Saint-Martin, we recall, taught that reintegration is possible because humanity retains a spark of its divine origin, and, moved by desire for God, can acquire knowledge of the interior truths. The various religious traditions of the world, as well as the Bible, confirm for the *homme de désir* the truths that he finds within himself. Yet, Saint-Martin's

⁶ Ernst Benz, *The Theology of Electricity*, trans. Wolfgang Taraba (Allison Park, PA: Pickwick Publications, 1989 [original German edition 1970]), 47, 53.

⁷ Benz, *Theology of Electricity*, 62, 64.

⁸ Benz, *Evolution and Christian Hope*, 168; Stoeffler, *German Pietism*, 110; Peter C. Erb, ed., *Pietists: Selected Writings* (New York: Paulist Press, 1983), 18.

⁹ Saint-Martin, *Oeuvres Majeures*, 5 vols., éd. Robert Amadou (Hildesheim, New York: Georg Olms Verlag, 1975–1990), 1:20–21*, 27–28*.

christology and soteriology remain highly orthodox. Fallen humanity retains the possibility of reintegration thanks to Christ, the divine Réparateur. Humanity must take Christ as its model, for through imitation of Christ individuals are reborn into a new life of participation in Christ, and in God through Christ. Further, Christ's sacrifice renders our suffering efficacious and gives us a new life. The Réparateur must be both divine and human since humanity could not be regenerated if Christ had been solely a human Réparateur, while if the Réparateur had not become human the path of suffering would never have been opened and all suffering would have been in vain.¹⁰ Saint-Martin's christology betrays none of Martinès' ambiguity; his Christ is both the God/man and the sole and sufficient saviour. Though Saint-Martin accepts that the restoration of fallen humanity began to take form at the moment of the Fall, whence the constant presence of the divine in history, he insists that salvation must await Christ. Christ's sacrifice culminates the history of bloody sacrificial réparateurs and transforms humanity by offering the possibility of rebirth into a new life.

Saint-Martin expresses his orthodox Pauline christology by means of the equally Pauline contrast between the old man and the new man. He also on occasion designates the rebirth of the new man by the New Testament use of the Stoic term *palingenesis*. The word palingenesis, in the sense of spiritual regeneration, appears in Matthew 19:28 and Titus 3:5. It further connotes, picking up the eschatological connotation of Stoic usage, a correspondance between the microcosmic palingenesis of the individual and the apocalyptic palingenesis of the macrocosm at the end of time when a new heaven and a new earth will replace present creation.¹¹ This is not, it will be recognized, the sense that palingenesis carries in Bonnet and Ballanche. Bonnet removed the eschatological connotation of the term by replacing the sense of once and for all with a series of rebirths and locating this series in history. Adapting Bonnet's recoinage of palingenesis to signify ascent within the great chain of being, Ballanche applies the historical series of rebirths to social institutions and similarly rejects apocalyptic.

Do historical events play any role in effecting reintegration, or is

¹⁰ Saint-Martin, *Le Nouvel Homme* in *Oeuvres Majeures*, 4:41–43*. See also Frank Paul Bowman, *Le Christ des barricades, 1789–1848* (Paris: Cerf, 1987), 45–46.

¹¹ Saint-Martin, *Le Nouvel Homme* in *Oeuvres Majeures*, 4:13*.

history for Saint-Martin, as for Boehme, Oetinger, and Martinès de Pascally, simply the stage on which a spiritual drama is played out? Saint-Martin's interpretation of the overwhelming historical event of the French Revolution (analogous to the Thirty Years' War for Boehme) may serve as a testcase for this question. Though Saint-Martin observed the Revolution and its social and political consequences with interest and even enthusiasm, his analysis sought to discern the providential design behind the revolutionary events.¹² Saint-Martin's theosophy is built on the twin convictions that sensible objects are also signs of a hidden reality and that the meaning of all historical events is ultimately consequent on the Fall. The history of humanity begins from the "*prévarication*" (a term Saint-Martin borrowed from Martinès de Pasqually to designate the metaphysical Fall of humanity) in which humanity lost the perfection of its primordial state in which it participated in the divine pleroma. For Saint-Martin, as for Milton, the way back is barred; post-lapsarian history is thus not a question of returning to a past, but of conquering a future. Fallen humanity, which retains the germ of the image of Divinity within itself, must draw out its divine life from under the bondage of its fallen status by reorienting its will, still free despite the Fall, with the divine will. The identity Saint-Martin posits between the regenerated human will and the divine will makes it possible for humanity to reattain its true end and become once again the image of God. The attainment of this glorious future is the "*Grand Oeuvre*" of reintegration.¹³

Historical events are signs of the *Grand Oeuvre* of reintegration. Post-lapsarian humanity is possessed by nostalgia for its origin, and constantly seeks, without being aware of the true cause of its search, an ideal harmonious socio-political order in which to develop itself in its truth and its plenitude. The quest for such an order governs history; Saint-Martin interprets the socio-political life of humanity as a progression toward harmony by means of a sequence of "violent and convulsive efforts", which he calls *crises*. Crises, analogous to the delirium of the sick person whose convulsions are at once signs of the illness and of struggle against the illness, are at once signs of the desire for reintegration and of progress toward reintegration. Crises

¹² Nicole Jacques-Chaquin, "*Le Crocodile* (1799) ou Le Paris fantastique d'une Révolution figurée" in *Les Cahiers de Saint-Martin* (forthcoming), 241.

¹³ Nicole Chaquin, "Le Citoyen Louis-Claude de Saint-Martin, Théosophe révolutionnaire" in *Dix-Huitième Siècle* (Numéro spécial: *Lumières et Révolution* [Paris: Garnier]) 6 (1974): 215-217.

assist the work of reintegration both because they add to the suffering that is part of the reintegrative process and because they provide ideal conditions for the reactivation of the primitive faculties of rapidity and energy characteristic of humanity in its primordial state but possessed only in potential since the Fall. The Revolutionary crisis, in particular, reactivates these primitive faculties and thus marks a new origin for humanity. Saint-Martin believes that not only is this positive evolution irreversible but it will be extended to other nations through the spread of the Revolution.¹⁴

The idea of the Revolution as a new historical origin reappears in Saint-Martin's last work, *Le Ministère de l'homme-esprit* (1802). Here, Saint-Martin traces the history of sacrifice through which the blood of Christ and of the *hommes de désir* who follow him effect the rehabilitation of humanity. Through imitation of Christ, *hommes de désir* are not only redeemed but, coming after Christ and possessing the gift of the Spirit, surpass him in the work of the sanctification of the universe through suffering.¹⁵ Historically, the Revolution raises the French people into a "peuple de la loi nouvelle", the law of action that succeeds ages of sacrifice and prayer. Saint-Martin describes the Revolution as an "image abrégée du jugement dernier" in recognition of its epochal status of inaugurating the reign of the *homme-esprit* (corporate regenerated humanity, a critical mass of individual *hommes de désir*) who rediscovers its function of administering the universe by the creative power of the Word.¹⁶ The Revolution, like all actions in the physical world, is a sign of spiritual action, of divine *magisme*. By manifesting rediscovered human energy and thereby announcing reintegration, the Revolution is a great sign marking the liberation of humanity.¹⁷ Saint-Martin's interpretation of the Revolution decodes it as a hieroglyph of spiritual meaning.

Saint-Martin's reflections on the Revolution contributed to the elaboration within his theosophy of a philosophy of history in which humanity, engaged in a process of historical becoming, raises itself to a dynamic consciousness of eternal truths. The *Grand Oeuvre* of rein-

¹⁴ Jacques-Chaquin, "Le Crocodile", 243–244.

¹⁵ Frank Paul Bowman, "'Precious Blood' in Religion, Literature, Eroticism, and Politics" in *French Romanticism* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1990), 103. This essay links Saint-Martin's Illuminist adaptation of the Sacred Blood of Jesus to numerous other reinterpretations of this Catholic figure during the Romantic period.

¹⁶ Jacques-Chaquin, "Le Crocodile", 244–245.

¹⁷ Chaquin, "Le Citoyen Louis-Claude de Saint-Martin", 213, 218.

tegration, as an epic of the human will, culminates when regenerated humanity, the *homme-esprit*, becomes once again a flawless mirror of Divinity, when the reconquest of humanity's quasi-divine status in the realisation of its primordial state restores unity and universal harmony. The providential design for history is thus fulfilled not by the establishment of new social and political institutions but by spiritual reintegration.¹⁸ Historical events do not in themselves effect reintegration; rather, they are signs of the activity of the reawakened will and primitive faculties, which are the true agents of reintegration. Saint-Martin values history not for itself but for the divine signs it encodes. While his reflections on history and politics inspired certain socialist visionaries of the 1830s in their attempts to establish terrestrial utopias, for Saint-Martin himself historical events are symbolic of, not instrumental to, the reintegration of humanity.¹⁹ Though history points to it, Saint-Martin's new order is outside history altogether. Ultimately, Saint-Martin, like Boehme, Oetinger, and Martinès, regards reintegration as an interior reorientation of the will and looks to the end, not the culmination, of history. Similarly, though suffering is part of the reintegrative process, it too is a sign, and not a means, of reintegration. Saint-Martin's theosophical philosophy of history, though it emphasizes both suffering and spiritual progress, does not ground them in the historical process.

Fabre d'Olivet follows his Illuminist predecessors in predicating history on cosmogony. *Histoire philosophique du genre humain*, his exposition of the history of the human race in light of his own theosophical system, is prefaced by a lengthy "Dissertation introductive" in which Fabre declares that conventional history is false because it has been written without knowledge of the true principles that govern the cosmos and history. In order to understand the successive development of humanity, its moral faculties and their action, we must first grasp the metaphysical facts of the spiritual nature of humanity and its place in the hierarchy of the universe.²⁰ Happily, in his previous works (notably *Vers dorés de Pythagore* and *La Langue hébraïque restituée*) Fabre has set out the metaphysical status of humanity, and so is now

¹⁸ Chaquin, "Le Citoyen Louis-Claude de Saint-Martin", 224; Jacques-Chaquin, "*Le Crocodile*", 242.

¹⁹ Bowman, "'Precious Blood'", 103. See also Bowman, *Le Christ des barricades*, 47–48.

²⁰ Fabre d'Olivet, *Histoire philosophique du genre humain*, 2 vols. (Paris: 1824; reprinted Paris: L'Age d'homme, 1974), 1:13, 17.

able to write the definitive history of the world. The “Dissertation introductive” summarizes (and in places revises) the metaphysical foundation established in the earlier works on which *Histoire philosophique du genre humain* is built.

Though Fabre d’Olivet refers to humanity as the *règne hominal*; that is, the fourth kingdom, following the mineral, vegetable, and animal kingdoms, he insists that the human essence is distinct from lower essences and that there is no continuity between the natural world and humanity. The *règne hominal*, in fact, is Fabre d’Olivet’s name for the primordial Adam of the Esoteric tradition. Fabre identifies primordial Adam, or *règne hominal*, with the Will, which, along with Providence and Destiny, is one of the three powers, or cosmogonic principles, of the universe. This glorious identity has been obscured by the Fall; the goal of the rehabilitatory process is to reintegrate the primordial Adam and restore the *règne hominal* to cosmogonic status.²¹

Fabre d’Olivet’s commentary on Byron’s *Cain: A Mystery* (1821), written in the year between the two editions of *Histoire philosophique*, interprets the Genesis narratives concerning the three sons of Adam and Eve as allegories of his cosmogonic principles. Adam was not simply the first human; he was a primordial being, the *homme universel*, in whom all future humanity was contained and in whose nature Will and Providence (affinity to God’s intention for humanity) co-existed in perfect harmony. The Fall shattered the harmony within Adam’s nature, precipitating both descent into the material universe of time and space and dispersal of primordial Adam into the successive generations and myriad individuals of the human race. Adam’s posterity divided his integrated nature: Cain embodied the faculty of Will and Abel that of Providence. This division was to be perpetuated in their descendants, creating in effect two races: *hommes volitifs*, who rely on their own powers, and *hommes providentiels*, who trust in God’s love for humanity.²² Adam’s sons and their respective descendants were intended to co-operate in the redemption of the human race. The free submission of human will to Providence would have quickly reintegrated primordial Adam; but Lucifer intervened. Knowing that he would not be able to dominate the providential race, the future

²¹ Fabre d’Olivet, *Histoire philosophique*, 1:22, 26; Léon Cellier, *Fabre d’Olivet. Contribution à l’Etude des aspects religieux du romantisme* (Paris: Nizet, 1953), 265.

²² Fabre d’Olivet, *Cain, mystère dramatique de Lord Byron* (Paris: 1823; reprinted Genève: Slatkine, 1981), 239–240.

descendants of Abel, Lucifer (actually a hypostatization of Will, and thus identical to Cain) persuaded Cain to kill his brother. Henceforth, Providence, annihilated by Will, no longer acts directly in the world.²³

After the murder of Abel, Adam and Eve had another son, Seth. Seth, however, embodied not Providence but Fabre's third cosmogonic principle, Destiny, or blind fate. Human history is henceforth a struggle between *hommes volitifs*, the descendants of Cain who champion anarchic liberty, and *hommes fatidiques*, the descendants of Seth who preach submission to necessity. Caught in this dismal struggle, humanity calls out to Providence for assistance, but in vain since, save for rare exceptions like Orpheus, Moses, and Buddha, *hommes providentiels* no longer walk the earth. Nevertheless, though Providence no longer intervenes directly in human affairs, it still operates indirectly. Like Hegel's "cunning of reason", Fabre's Providence uses wilful human intentions to effect its own end of the redemption of humanity. Nevertheless, despite the resiliency of Providence, humanity has had to pay for Cain's crime through increased suffering. While the Fall necessitated a certain period of expiation, symbolized by the curse placed on Adam and Eve upon their expulsion from Eden, the murder of Abel, by banishing direct Providence from the world, greatly extended the time, and therefore the suffering, required for redemption.²⁴ The existence of evil, Fabre concludes, must be attributed to human actions: first Adam's Fall, then Cain's murder of Abel. Not only is God not responsible for evil in the world, but Providence ensures that, despite its best efforts to the contrary, humanity will be redeemed in the end.²⁵

In the "Dissertation introductive" that prefaces *Histoire philosophique*, Fabre d'Olivet declares that fallen humanity displays a triple nature, at once body, soul, and spirit, and lives a triple life, instinctive, passionate [*animique*], and intellectual (i.e., spiritual). These three lives, when they are fully developed, intermingle and are confounded into a fourth, or volitive, life. It is through the exercise of the volitive life,

²³ Fabre d'Olivet, *Cain, mystère dramatique*, 221–222, 246.

²⁴ Fabre d'Olivet, *Cain, mystère dramatique*, 236–238, 245, 247.

²⁵ "Comme toute sa génération, comme tous les enfants du siècle, Fabre, témoin de la Révolution, a été obsédé par le problème du mal. . . . Fabre d'Olivet se fait l'avocat de la Providence, et c'est le problème du mal qui tient la plus grande place dans ses commentaires des *Ver dorés*. Disons plus: si l'on voulait ramener à une idée centrale l'oeuvre théosophique de Fabre d'Olivet, c'est dans la défense de la Providence divine que l'on trouverait la raison d'être de tous ses ouvrages." Cellier, *Fabre d'Olivet*, 195.

which is the proper life of humanity, that humanity gradually raises itself to the cosmogonic status of Will. Upon the realization of this status, the reestablishment of perfect harmony among the universal ternary of Providence, Will, and Destiny will become possible. Such harmony, in turn, will create, replicating on the macrocosmic level the fourth life of humanity, a fourth power, which is the very image or mirror of divinity and the realization of Fabre's version of Illuminist reintegration.²⁶

In its present state, humanity is a power in the universe, but a power only in germ. Just as a plant requires cultivation in order to develop to its full potential, so humanity, which Fabre calls a celestial plant (cf. the agricultural imagery of Fabre's "Théodoxie universelle"), requires cultivation (in human terms, civilization, particularly the social order) in order to reattain its status as a cosmogonic principle.²⁷ The image of the germ is so fundamental to Fabre's theosophy that we should not be surprised that he finds authority for it in the Mosaic cosmogony recovered in his restitution of the Hebrew language. The first word of Genesis, *bereshith*, according to Fabre, ought not be translated "in the beginning" but rather "*in principio*", "in principle", "in potential". Creation signifies not the act of bringing something into being out of nothing but a process of bringing something from potential being into actual being. Everything, including humanity, exists in germ and then develops through the exercise of its will. Since the will of a being corresponds to the essence of its species placed in it by God at creation, repeated exercise of the will progressively realizes the external characteristics appropriate to its essence.²⁸

C'est par sa faculté volitive efficiente, émanée de son principe, que tout être se conforme à l'extérieur. Les naturalistes qui ont prétendu que le tigre était tigre, parce qu'il avait des dents, des griffes, un estomac, des boyaux, conformés d'une telle manière ont parlé légèrement et sans science. . . . Le tigre a ces dents, ces griffes, cet estomac, ces boyaux parce qu'il est tigre; c'est-à-dire parce que sa faculté volitive efficiente le constitue tel.²⁹

Fabre d'Olivet's theory of development is a variant of preformationism in which the voluntarism of Boehmist Illuminism has been added to

²⁶ Fabre d'Olivet, *Histoire philosophique*, 1:27, 34–35; Cellier, *Fabre d'Olivet*, 271.

²⁷ Fabre d'Olivet, *Histoire philosophique*, 1:46–47.

²⁸ Cellier, *Fabre d'Olivet*, 154–155.

²⁹ Fabre d'Olivet, *La Langue hébraïque restituée*, 2 vols. (Paris: 1815–1816; reprinted Lausanne: l'Age d'homme, 1975), 2:202.

the organic language of biological preformationism. Like Oetinger, Fabre read Bonnet.

The development of humanity draws on the other two cosmogonic powers: Providence provides the principle and Destiny furnishes the elements by which the Will develops. Post-lapsarian humanity was at first subject to Destiny, but the divine germ it carries within itself, a spark of the divine will, develops, by reacting against Destiny itself, into an opposing volitional force whose essence is liberty.³⁰ This is not a smooth or uniform process. Ever since the murder of Abel, history has been an incessant struggle between the human Will and Destiny. When the human Will sides with or yields to Destiny, centuries of decadence and oppression result. Conversely, the Will allied to Providence leads humanity toward perfection.³¹ Cosmically speaking, the Will of humanity functions as a mediating power, entering elementary nature in order to bring harmony there and reuniting Destiny and Providence. The full development of the volitional germ constitutes the restored Will of primordial Adam, and thus the restoration of the *règne hominal* to its original and proper dignity as a cosmogonic principle. The action of human volition reintegrates the *règne hominal* and harmonizes the great ternary of Providence, Will, and Destiny into the fourth principle that is the mirror of divinity.³²

Fabre d'Olivet's cosmogonic doctrines—primordial Adam, the Fall as dispersal of the primordial Adam into a material world of time and space, free will and human responsibility, and redemption as the reintegration of the lost unity—are all basic Illuminist doctrines. His christology, however, is quite distinct. Whatever Saint-Martin's dalliance with non- or pre-Christian traditions, *le Philosophe inconnu* ultimately remained true to the unique and necessary Christ the God/man. And if the status of Christ is ambiguous in Boehme, Oetinger, and Martinès de Pascally, they nevertheless considered themselves sincere Christians. Fabre d'Olivet, in contrast, reduces Christianity to merely one manifestation of primitive revelation. And while Fabre calls Jesus a divine man, he awards this title to all *hommes providentiels* (including, inter alia, Krishna, Odin, and Apollonius of Tyana). Similarly, all religions are true, and agree with each other, to the extent

³⁰ Fabre d'Olivet, *Histoire philosophique*, 1:48, 51.

³¹ Brian Juden, *Traditions orphiques et tendances mystiques dans le romantisme français, 1800–1855* (Paris: Klincksieck, 1971), 188.

³² Fabre d'Olivet, *Histoire philosophique*, 1:51–53.

that they derive from the primitive revelation. Fabre cites the agreement among cosmogonies as proof of the primitive revelation granted to humanity by Providence. What makes Jesus great in Fabre's opinion is that he showed by his death and resurrection what the human will is capable of when it knows itself to be in conformity with the will of Providence. Historically speaking, Jesus was an instrument used by Providence to maintain an equal balance in the world between liberty and necessity, between Europe and Asia at a time when the Roman empire was about to be overthrown by barbarians. Jesus was charged by Providence with calming the impetuosity of the invaders in order to prevent total dissolution of the social state, just as a few centuries later Providence would raise up Muhammad in order to defend Asia from domination by Europe. Fabre is willing to concede that Christianity has changed the world on the moral or historical plane, but insists that Christianity has brought nothing new on the religious plane. In fact, by its anthropomorphism (the God-Man) and doctrine of the equality of souls, Christianity even represents a religious regression.³³ Jesus, in Fabre's theosophy, ceases to be the unique and necessary Redeemer. Christ as saviour is replaced by the development of humanity into the cosmogonic *règne hominal* through the exercise of its will.

In the "Discours sur l'essence et la forme de la poésie", the lengthy essay that prefaces his *Vers dorés de Pythagore* (1813), Fabre d'Olivet explicitly addresses the relationship between the spiritual process of reintegration and the succession of historical events in his distinction between allegorical history and positive history. The allegorical genius of ancient poets and modern Illuminists grasps the unfolding of the human essence: representative leaders and events, including fictional or mythological ones, stand for the spiritual progress of the human race toward reintegration. Positive history, the work of "*froids chronologistes*", merely presents a scrupulous record of dates and facts that by concentrating on details loses sight of the overall direction of history. There is an unbridgeable gap between positive history, which chronicles events that happened but that have no spiritual significance, and allegorical history, which arranges events that may never have happened into a dramatization of the spiritual destiny of humanity. Allegorical history alone, Fabre declares, is worthy of study.³⁴

³³ Cellier, *Fabre d'Olivet*, 123, 283–284, 401–402.

³⁴ Fabre d'Olivet, *Les Vers dorés de Pythagore* (Paris: 1813; reprinted Paris: L'Age

Allegorical history presupposes that the end of history is known. In the historiographic remarks prefatory to *Histoire philosophique du genre humain*, which applies the allegorical method to the entire span of human history, Fabre d'Olivet explicitly subordinates history to metaphysics:

Evitons la faute que presque tous les philosophes ont commise, surtout dans ces temps modernes, et songeons que s'il est ridicule de prétendre écrire sur l'homme sans le connaître, il est à la fois ridicule et odieux de prétendre lui tracer une route sans être parfaitement instruite du lieu d'où il part, du but où il tend, et de l'objet de son voyage.³⁵

Metaphysics governs history; just as the form of a tiger is the realization of its essence, so the history of humanity is merely the playing out in time of the consequences of the metaphysical principles contained in its essence.

Fabre d'Olivet's distinction between allegorical and positive history exposes the disjunction between historical events and the spiritual reintegration of humanity characteristic of the Illuminist tradition. From Boehme to Fabre d'Olivet, the Illuminist tradition teaches that the reintegration of humanity from the Fall is a spiritual process of the unfolding of the metaphysical principles enclosed in the human essence from its origin. While history is the arena in which reintegration is accomplished, historical events at most mark or symbolize phases of this process; they in no way effect it. The locus of rehabilitation is instead the extra-historical interior volitional life of individuals.³⁶ History, whose corollary is suffering—whether sacrificial or merely punitive—, belongs to the fallen world of time and matter; reintegration does not redeem history, it is a redemption from history.

d'Homme, 1978), 26–27. See, especially for the application of the allegorical/positive distinction to poetics, Arlette Michel, "Ballanche et l'épopée romantique" in *Mélanges Jeanne Lods* (Paris: L'Ecole Normale Supérieure de Jeunes Filles, 1978), 878 and Arlette Michel, "La conception de l'épopée dans l'*Orphée* de Ballanche" in *Bulletin de l'Association Guillaume Budé* (1980): 324–325.

³⁵ Fabre d'Olivet, *Histoire philosophique*, 1:44.

³⁶ Wouter Hanegraaff has similarly called for scholars to be attentive to the distinction between the ahistorical sense the term "transmutation" carries for Esoteric authors before the Romantic period and subsequent temporalist interpretations of esoteric transmutation, beginning with those of the Romantics themselves. Wouter Hanegraaff, "Romanticism and the Esoteric Connection" in Roelof van den Broek and Wouter Hanegraaff, *Gnosis and Hermeticism from Antiquity to Modern Times* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1998), 261.

Historiosophy

The centrality of Illuminist themes to *Palingénésie sociale* warrants an examination of the relationship of historical process to the rehabilitation of humanity in Ballanche's philosophy of history in light of the theosophical philosophies of history of Fabre d'Olivet and Saint-Martin.

Arlette Michel has convincingly demonstrated that Ballanche's distinction between allegorical history and debased history (see Chapter Twelve) both appropriates and extends Fabre d'Olivet's distinction in "Discours sur l'essence et la forme de la poésie" between allegorical history and positive history. Not only do Ballanche's allegorical and debased history correspond to Fabre's allegorical and positive history, but Ballanche overcomes the radical discontinuity Fabre posits between the two sorts of history by demonstrating that positive history, in particular the history of social institutions, discloses, when correctly interpreted, the same providential law embodied symbolically in allegorical history.³⁷

In the "Prologue" to *Formule générale*, Ballanche affirms the complementarity of the two forms of history:

Le génie historique nuit à l'intuition, et la trouble profondément, parce que l'un, qui est l'analyse, ne semble pas s'accorder avec l'autre, que est la synthèse. Cependant ils doivent finir par se reconstruire dans une grande et majestueuse harmonie, car l'intuition n'est qu'une manifestation spontanée de la nature humaine, et les faits historiques n'en peuvent être que la réalisation successive.³⁸

Ballanche's rapprochement of synthetic and analytic, or allegorical and positive, history does not, let us hasten to add, make his historiography any less ideological than Fabre d'Olivet's. Just as Bonnet's preformationist evolutionism rules out random change in species, so Ballanche's social palingenesis ignores or distorts all events that do not reflect the providential law of plebeian evolution. Bonnet, Ballanche declares, founded the scientific cosmogony that will eventually confirm the general traditions.³⁹ That Ballanche conceives that his theory parallels in the social realm Bonnet's natural history is owing to a shared ideological foundation; that is, Bonnet's application of a teleological,

³⁷ Michel, "Ballanche et l'épopée romantique", 881.

³⁸ Ballanche, "Formule générale. Premier fragment. Prologue" in *Revue de Paris* 2 (1829): 153.

³⁹ *OC*, 4:67.

theological model to natural history, or his scientific ideology, is homologous with Ballanche's application of the same teleological, theological model to the history of human societies, or what we have called his historical ideology (see Chapter Nine).

Just as Ballanche modified Bonnet's theory of palingenesis by applying it to society, so he adapted his borrowings from Illuminism by linking them to the history of social institutions: "Lorsque l'initié sait tout ce que l'initiateur peut enseigner, il y a progrès; donc il y a lieu à constater le progrès en légalisant une transformation sociale".⁴⁰ Ballanche's synthesis of expiation and progress by means of themes appropriated from the Western Esoteric Tradition fuses Illuminism and historical-mindedness by reading historical events not merely as signs of the process of the reintegration of the primordial Adam but as the necessary and efficacious means of that reintegration. Ballanche, in short, historicizes what he borrows from Illuminism. Human beings themselves, under the guidance of providence, work out their own rehabilitation in the history of social institutions. The initiation that is achieved in ages of crisis modifies social structures, and the progressive modification of social structures effects rehabilitation. Like the Illuminists, Ballanche believes that one must know the metaphysical truths before one can understand history, but for Ballanche one of these metaphysical truths is that the spiritual rehabilitation of humanity begins in and through the historical process. Even though Ballanche remains fundamentally an idealist ("le spectacle du monde réalisé ne dit rien à ceux qui n'ont pas pénétré dans le monde des idées"),⁴¹ history matters. Ballanche's philosophy of history may be called a historiosophy in recognition that it is, at base, a historicization of the Illuminist process of the reintegration of humanity from the Fall.

The historiosophy of *Palingénésie sociale* effects the synthesis of expiation and progress approached, but never achieved, in the Illuminist tradition. The theosophies of Boehme and Oetinger, emerging from Lutheran Pietism, are epics of the inner life in which voluntarism marginalizes history. The Illuminisms of Saint-Martin and Fabre d'Olivet, reflecting the conviction of French Enlightenment thinkers that political events and social institutions are constituent elements of human development even while repudiating eighteenth-century

⁴⁰ OC, 4:282.

⁴¹ OC, 4:6.

rationalism and materialism,⁴² mark the beginning of the convergence of voluntarism and historical-mindedness inasmuch as the reorientation of the will effects changes in the social order and historical events are signs of reintegration. Ballanche's historiosophy, in which the social order (imposed by God) permits the rehabilitation of humanity by exacting expiation and effecting initiation, takes the further step of fusing the voluntarism of the interior life of theosophy with historical process.

Erik Iversen, quoting and discussing Bishop Warburton's attack in *The Divine Legation of Moses* (1741) on Athanasius Kircher, prematurely dismisses the influence of Neoplatonism and Hermeticism on European culture:

"It is pleasant to see him labouring thro' half a dozen Folios with Writings of late Greek Platonists, and forged Books of Hermes, which contain Philosophy, not Egyptian, to explain and illustrate old monuments not Philosophical. Here we leave him to course his Shadow of Dreams thro' all the fantastic Regions of Pythagoreic Platonism". Little did Warburton understand that in dismissing Kircher to pursue his "Neo-Platonic Shadow of Dreams", he heralded not only the disappearance of Neo-platonism from the hieroglyphical studies, but its total disappearance as an active element in European culture as well.⁴³

In fact, the grip of Neoplatonism and Hermeticism on the European cultural imagination was more tenacious than Iversen allows. In their reaction against Enlightenment rationalism, Romantics, enamoured of all things shadowy and dreamlike, again took up many Neoplatonic and Hermetic ideas. As Wouter Hanegraaff notes, the historical connection between Neoplatonism and Romanticism has been recognized since the important works of Lovejoy and Abrams, whereas the relevance of Hermeticism has been recognized only recently, most notably by Tuveson, who, however, presents Romanticism as a revival of Hermeticism without any debt at all to Neoplatonism. In fact, Neoplatonism and Hermeticism were inextricably interwoven in the Romantic, as in the early modern and Illuminist, imagination.⁴⁴ Note that Warburton explicitly identifies Hermeticism, Neoplatonism, and

⁴² "Spiritualiser le progrès, tel est le message de Fabre d'Olivet, et tel fut le grand rêve romantique". Cellier, *Fabre d'Olivet*, 403.

⁴³ Erik Iversen, *The Myth of Egypt and its Hieroglyphs in European Tradition* (Copenhagen: Gec Gad, 1961; reprint Princeton: Princeton UP, 1993), 105.

⁴⁴ Hanegraaff, *New Age Religion and Western Culture* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1996), 419. The studies in question are Arthur O. Lovejoy, *The Great Chain of Being* (New York: Harper, 1960), Meyer H. Abrams, *Natural Supernaturalism: Tradition and Revolution in*

Pythagoreanism as the constituents of Kircher's fantasy. The Romantics' revolutionized the esoteric, Neoplatonist-Hermetic worldview by interpreting it in light of their historical-mindedness. As we have observed above, from the Romantic period onwards esoteric transmutation has been interpreted in an evolutionist sense. Obversely, this study of Ballanche's historiosophy has demonstrated that Illuminist concepts were integral to the initial elaboration of Romantic historical-mindedness.

The Romantics' self-imposed task was to overcome the conflicts and transiencies of the times by grounding society and culture on the ontological order beyond history.⁴⁵ Their attempt to valorize at once eternal metaphysical truths, by which metahistorical categories provide a permanent ground for culture and a purpose to life, and historical process, by which temporal succession is affirmed as meaningful, represents a fundamental contradiction at the heart of Romanticism.⁴⁶ The compound word "historiosophy" expresses precisely this characteristic Romantic antinomy between eternal metaphysical truths and dynamic historical process. Ballanche's historiosophy is a particular illustration of McGann's argument that the Romantic belief that transcendental categories can provide a permanent ground for culture is a historically specific ideological construction that responds to the conditions and utilizes the intellectual resources of the Romantic period;⁴⁷ hence, the title of this study, *A Romantic Historiosophy*.

Two misinterpretations of the relationship of Ballanche's thought to Fabre d'Olivet's turn on failures to appreciate the extent to which Ballanche historicizes Illuminist reintegration in his historiosophy.

A. J. L. Busst has claimed that "Tout le système de Ballanche consiste donc à expliquer le cours de l'histoire universelle par l'opération de ces deux forces: du Destin initiateur et actif, et de la Volonté initiable et passive".⁴⁸ While Ballanche's division of the social world into two opposing principles, one progressive, one static, does seem

Romantic Literature (New York: Norton, 1971), and Ernest Lee Tuveson, *The Avatars of Thrice Great Hermes: An Approach to Romanticism* (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 1982).

⁴⁵ See Jerome J. McGann, *The Romantic Ideology: A Critical Investigation* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983), 69.

⁴⁶ See Jean-Claude Fizaïne, "Les Aspects mystiques du romantisme français" in *Romantisme* 11 (1976): 6 and Max Milner, "Temps historiques et temps mythiques dans le romantisme français" in *Mélanges Littéraires François Germain* (Dijon: Faculté de Lettres et Philosophie, 1979), 112.

⁴⁷ McGann, *The Romantic Ideology*, 134.

⁴⁸ *VH*, 20.

similar to Fabre d'Olivet's division, in *Cain, mystère dramatique* and, above all, *Histoire philosophique du genre humain*, of humanity into the camps of Will and Destiny, there are several objections to be raised against the direct filiation of Ballanche's principles to Fabre's cosmogonic powers.

In *Histoire philosophique du genre humain*, Fabre does not privilege Europe in the manner of Ballanche. For Fabre, both Europe and Asia have a reconstructive mission to accomplish, and both are incomplete by themselves. Europe and Asia must blend together to form the universal theocratic empire that is to precede complete reintegration. Cosmogonically speaking, rehabilitation is the re-establishment of a harmonious balance between Fabre's three principles of Will, Destiny, and Providence. Historically, this means that Fabre interprets the long history of invasions and counter-invasions between Europe and Asia as valuable safeguards against the extremes of Will or Destiny that would result if either Europe and Asia were permitted to proceed in isolation. In fact, the missions of *hommes providentiels* relate to just this regulation: Orpheus and Jesus and tempered the Will of the West, while Buddha and Muhammad tempered the Destiny of the Orient. Europe and Asia, that is, mutually balance and correct one another, and must end by forming a single empire in which neither dominates.⁴⁹ While the Orient is important for Ballanche as the homeland of the initiatory principle, it must, as we saw in Chapter Ten, eventually throw off its stasis and become progressive under the tutelage of the West. Ballanche posits evolution where Fabre seeks only harmony.

Ballanche's social evolution operates by means of initiation. Initiation is unimportant to the unfolding of history for Fabre, who attributes the esoteric/exoteric distinction found in many ancient religions to the need to conserve the traditions and offer asylum for virtue in times of despotic oppression.⁵⁰

An essential aspect of Ballanche's progressive principle is its plebeianism: social evolution is plebeian evolution, just as the religious truth embodied in Christianity is the law of religious equality. Fabre has no notion of plebeianism; in fact, his *hommes providentiels* are always theocratic because theocracy is the political correlate of the

⁴⁹ Fabre d'Olivet, *Histoire philosophique*, 2:386.

⁵⁰ Fabre d'Olivet, *Histoire philosophique*, 2:6–7.

principle of unity. The balance among the principles that Fabre desires can be attained only under theocratic government.⁵¹

Turning to recent French history, Fabre admires Louis XIV and blames his ministers and Mme. de Maintenon for all the wrongs of his reign. The French Revolution itself he understands as merely one, albeit the most forceful, of the storms troubling contemporary Europe. Attributable to the unrestrained Will of the European races, personified in Robespierre, raging against all despotism, the purpose of these political storms is to purge the social world in preparation for the re-establishment of harmony.⁵² The Revolution was stopped in due time by a powerful opposing force of Destiny, in the person of Bonaparte, a *homme fatidique*.⁵³ In granting it only a destructive role, Fabre offers a purely negative valuation of the Revolution. Ballanche speaks of Bonaparte as embodying Destiny, but whereas Fabre's Bonaparte-as-Destiny represents a necessary evil required to check the raging Will manifested in the Revolution, Ballanche designates Bonaparte as a representative of Destiny in order to indicate his status as a regression to ancient or Oriental despotism, and thus an anachronism at the stage of plebeian evolution reached in modern Europe.

Fabre bitterly attacks the principle of constitutional monarchy on the grounds that as a mixed constitution Louis XVIII's Charter is fragile and at the least shock will collapse into anarchy.⁵⁴ *Histoire philosophique* concludes with a call for France, Europe, and ultimately the whole world, to form a single theocratic empire under the final authority of a Supreme Pontiff, thereby uniting at last the three cosmogonic principles in the ideal social structure.⁵⁵ Ever since *Institutions sociales*, Ballanche has insisted that the providentially ordained form of government for contemporary France is the constitutional monarchy of the Charter. Ballanche condemns the theocratic ideal as yet another anachronistic regression.

In sum, these divergences over the relation of Europe to Asia, initiation, plebeianism, theocracy, and recent French history force us to conclude that Ballanche's philosophy of history is not simply, as

⁵¹ Fabre d'Olivet, *Histoire philosophique*, 2:387 and 2:413.

⁵² Fabre d'Olivet, *Histoire philosophique*, 2:459–460.

⁵³ Fabre d'Olivet, *Histoire philosophique*, 2:334.

⁵⁴ Fabre d'Olivet, *Histoire philosophique*, 2:425.

⁵⁵ Fabre d'Olivet, *Histoire philosophique*, 2:462.

Busst maintains, an application to history of Fabre d'Olivet's categories of Will and Destiny.⁵⁶ In fact, Ballanche was influenced in a fundamental way more by Fabre's pre-historical cosmogony (primordial Adam, the Fall, and free will) and theories about language than by his depiction of the historical process; more, that is, by *La Langue hébraïque restituée*, *Cain*, and "Discours sur la poésie" than by *Histoire philosophique du genre humain*. Nevertheless, numerous borrowings on particular points from the latter work are discernible throughout *Palingénésie sociale*, and particularly in *Vision d'Hébal*. *Vision d'Hébal*, however, is a poetic recapitulation of the history of humanity depicted in the other works of *Palingénésie sociale*, and as such it offers an epitome of the major events of that history rather than an account of how it operates. *Vision d'Hébal* is thus pure allegorical history in the manner of Fabre; it is Ballanche's *Histoire philosophique*. While Busst's learned commentary is excellent regarding *Vision d'Hébal*, in extending its allegorical-Fabrian historiography to the rest of *Palingénésie sociale* Busst obscures the extent to which Ballanche's historiosophy establishes the historical process as the locus of rehabilitation. Ballanche, himself, of course, does not think that in the end intuition and historical investigation conflict. Intuition, or synthesis, is immediate vision that grasps human nature as a whole (*Vision d'Hébal*), whereas historical investigation, or analysis, grasps human nature in its successive realization (the works comprising *Palingénésie sociale*). Since both apprehend the same reality, the two modes of perception ultimately harmonize.

Brian Juden, though he bases his account on the *Orphée*, similarly errs. While he is correct in stating that "palingénésie sociale définit un monde social où se poursuivent simultanément l'action divine, ou *magisme* dans le sens martiniste, et l'action humaine. Le mythe renferme un sign céleste, une correspondance entre le ciel et la terre, entre la volonté divine et une phase de l'expiation sociale de l'humanité",⁵⁷ he pushes Ballanche's affinity with Saint-Martin and Fabre d'Olivet too far when he characterizes the thought of all three as "l'allégorie de la volonté aux prises avec l'inertie du temps et de la matière".⁵⁸ While "the allegory of the will grappling with the inertia of time and

⁵⁶ Nor, then, is Ballanche simply, in Cellier's phrase, "un Fabre d'Olivet catholique et social". Cellier, "Fabre d'Olivet, protestant et théocrate" in *Parcours Initiatiques* (Neuchâtel, à la Baconnière; Grenoble: Presses Universitaires, 1977), 92.

⁵⁷ Brian Juden, "Particularités de mythe d'Orphée chez Ballanche" in *Cahiers de l'Association internationale des Etudes françaises* 22 (1970): 139.

⁵⁸ Juden, *Traditions orphiques et tendances mystiques*, 737.

matter” accurately encapsulates the theosophies of Saint-Martin and Fabre d’Olivet, it is an astonishing phrase to apply to Ballanche’s social palingenesis. The problem is Juden’s assertion that time is foreign to Ballanche’s thought because he insists that humanity consists of a single, inalterable human essence.⁵⁹ We return here to Ballanche’s historicization of preformationist developmentalism. Humanity does consist of a single essence, but the essence unfolds over time. It is true that because the human essence unfolds according to a divinely preordained pattern and because Ballanche’s historical-mindedness is circumscribed by his metaphysics, social palingenesis does not meet the epistemological standards of the modern discipline of history. Nevertheless, if Ballanche’s thought is less than a critical philosophy of history it is more than a theosophy; it is, precisely, a historiosophy: the historical process not only symbolizes but effects the spiritual rehabilitation of humanity.

Anterior Christianity

The historiosophy of *Palingénésie sociale* resolves the ambiguous christology of Ballanche’s earlier works. It should be noted immediately that only in *Vision d’Hébal* does Ballanche speak extensively of Jesus Christ, and in this work he presents a far more orthodox account of the Christian saviour than in the rest of *Palingénésie sociale*. Ballanche rarely, except in *Vision*, mentions Christ by name; he speaks instead of Médiateur and Réparateur. One should not make too much of these terms, which Ballanche uses interchangeably. While they do suggest, respectively, Fabre d’Olivet and Saint-Martin, in fact they are fairly common period paraphrases for Christ, as a glance at the works of contemporary Catholic Traditionalists like Louis de Bonald will show. More significant is the weight Ballanche puts on the historical process of mediation or reparation relative to the sacrificial death of Jesus.

Ballanche’s few direct references to Jesus focus on his promulgation of the law of religious equality: “La loi des castes a été abolie par Jésus-Christ, puisqu’il venait donner à tous également la loi morale et la confraternité du même culte”.⁶⁰ In pre-Christian times, social

⁵⁹ Juden, *Traditions orphiques et tendances mystiques*, 270.

⁶⁰ *OC*, 4:65.

progress operated by means of class struggle, archetypically outlined in *Formule générale*. Christian confraternity replaced class struggle with the recognition that humanity forms an undifferentiated whole. The old caste divisions, maintained by solidarity and necessary in the earlier stages of social evolution, were based on religious doctrine inasmuch as they were considered to mirror ontological divisions. Christ, by teaching that all humanity participates in a single human essence, as symbolized by a single religion for all irrespective of social station or nationality, overthrew the religious justification for caste distinctions. Charity henceforth replaces solidarity as the social bond. Further, by preaching his doctrine in public, Christ communicated to all human beings the moral and religious knowledge reserved for patricians in the exclusive initiations of antiquity.⁶¹ Christ's promulgation of the law of religious equality, however, did not in itself complete the rehabilitatory function of social evolution. Though Christ vitiated the religious justification for social and civil inequities, he did not effect the extension of the principle of religious equality into the civil and political realm. Social evolution since Christ is nothing other than the struggle for the legal recognition of human equality. Social evolution will be complete only when human societies manifest, and enshrine in law, perfect equality.

Christ inaugurates the plebeian age since it is founded on the law of religious equality. In his discussion of the three ages of humanity, Ballanche correlates the mythological sequence of divinities (Saturn, Jupiter, Bacchus) with the three ages of history (Titanic or cosmological, patrician or epic, and plebeian or historical). Bacchus, god of the plebeian age, succeeds Jupiter, the patrician god. In this schema Bacchus represents the age inaugurated by Christ. What is the relation between Christ and Bacchus? In a manuscript note, unseen by orthodox eyes, Ballanche did not scruple to identify them: "Le Christ est le Bacchus succédant à Jupiter".⁶² Christ, like Bacchus, is the god of plebeianism. It is possible to make a distinction between Christ and Bacchus whereby the historical Christ, as a specific Mediator, inaugurated the plebeian age, whereas the mythological Bacchus represents humanity acting in history during the third age of social evolution to effect its own rehabilitation. Nevertheless, Christ and Bacchus are ultimately conflated because humanity, even if guided

⁶¹ See *VH*, 32–33.

⁶² BML, MSS 1806–1810, Dossier 24. Quoted by Busst in *VH*, 196.

by individual Mediators like Christ, is its own Mediator: "L'homme a été crée dans un ordre hiérarchique d'où il est descendu par sa faute; il faut qu'il s'y remplace lui-même par la vertu du Médiateur identifié à la nature humaine".⁶³ Expiatory suffering constitutes humanity's Passion and initiation its death and resurrection.⁶⁴ *Vision d'Hébal* concludes with a vision in which reintegrated humanity appears at the end of time as Christ transfigured on Mount Tabor.⁶⁵ Ballanche's version of the Incarnation holds that the eternal truth deigned to enter the world by incarnating itself in the progressive expressions of the progressive being it addressed.⁶⁶ For Ballanche, then, the Word is pure logos; Christ is elided as the divine thought works directly through humanity in history.

Ballanche did not limit the expectation of a Mediator to the Judaeo-Christian tradition. The notion of a Mediator who will deliver humanity from the ancient anathema is imprinted on what Ballanche calls the "traditions générales du genre humain". The general traditions bear unanimous witness to the notion of a primeval Fall and the subsequent need for rehabilitation through expiation:

Si nous interrogeons les doctrines mystiques unies à tous les religions, et répandues de toute antiquité, dans le monde, nous y trouverons une triste et terrible unanimité sur ces points principaux, la punition d'une première faute, le besoin d'une expiation . . . (*OC*, 4:30).

And again, in the next paragraph:

La manifestation de l'homme sur la terre et dans le temps est donc un châtiment qui lui est infligé, puisque, selon toutes les religions, il doit se purifier de sa naissance, et que sa vie entière est une épreuve; ou plutôt c'est ce qui fait que sa vie mortelle est une épreuve (*OC*, 4:32).

The general traditions, moreover, attest to far more than the Fall and the need for expiation; they preserve and transmit the ideal, universal mythology of the ancient world (see Chapter Twelve): "j'entends ici la foi dans un sens étendu, planant au-dessus de toutes les religions, pour ne s'appliquer qu'à ce que j'appelle les traditions générales, la religion universelle du genre humain".⁶⁷ Noah's descendants named

⁶³ *VE*, 111–112.

⁶⁴ "Dans la langue sacrée initiation veut dire mort". *OC*, 6:50. Cf. the deaths of Orpheus and the Homme sans nom.

⁶⁵ *VH*, 238,

⁶⁶ *OC*, 4:362–363.

⁶⁷ *OC*, 4:368.

in Genesis 10, the fathers of the nations dispersed over the earth, were the depositaries of the general traditions.⁶⁸ Hence, the Gentile races possessed the same traditions as the Hebrews, and secular history and sacred history recount the same history of rehabilitation. Ballanche maintains, citing Acts in support, that providence governed the ancient Gentile peoples through the general traditions, just as it did the Hebrews through direct revelation.⁶⁹ He does not cite the exact text; possibly he is thinking of Paul's speech to the Athenians in Acts 17:22–34. Despite his professed subservience to the Bible,⁷⁰ Ballanche rarely cites Scripture (*Vision d'Hébal* again is the exception), and when he does it is usually in support of heterodox notions. Ballanche further, alluding to Acts 7:22, suggests that the Egyptians instructed Moses himself in the general traditions. That Moses had been initiated in Egypt was a venerable Hermeticist claim.⁷¹ While a few *érudits* of previous centuries (for example, Gabriel Naudé, *Apologie des grandes hommes soupçonnés de magie* [Paris: 1625]) attempted to subordinate the genealogy of wisdom to Hebrew sacred history by insisting that the Egyptians had learned their science from Abraham, Illuminists and Romantics invariably omit this patriarchal link from their genealogies of wisdom.

Ballanche asserts that the general traditions retain the memory of what God intended humanity to be and guide its rehabilitation by providing the peoples of the world with the truth necessary to each stage of their development and in a form relative to their capacities:

[La vérité] se manifeste selon les facultés de l'homme, et selon son intelligence. Ce qu'il faut que l'homme connaisse de la vérité, selon les temps et les lieux, se révèle toujours selon les temps et les lieux. La vérité nécessaire au genre humain a toujours été et sera toujours dans le genre humain (*OC*, 6:146).

The general traditions, then, are modified by local conditions but always retain a kernel of truth. However weakened, the divine thought veiled by the various local distortions is always accessible to those

⁶⁸ *VH*, 149. Cf. Ballanche's remark late in his life: "Ce ne sont pas seulement les pères de la race future qui sont sauvés [du déluge]; ce sont aussi les sciences primitives, les arts primitives." Ballanche to Hautefeuille, 11 March 1847, in Alfred Marquiset, *Ballanche et Mme. d'Hautefeuille. Lettres inédites* (Paris: Champion, 1912), 254.

⁶⁹ *OC*, 4:110–111.

⁷⁰ *OC*, 4:243.

⁷¹ See D. P. Walker, *The Ancient Theology* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1972), passim. Fabre d'Olivet falls in line in *Vers dorés de Pythagore*, 41.

who submit to initiation. Though the traditions have been obscured over time, they have never been entirely perverted; hence, all religions contain some reflection of divine truth:

Les traditions, soyons-en bien convaincus, ne peuvent jamais être entièrement perverses. Sous ce point de vue élevé, la diversité des cultes a quelque analogie avec la diversité des langues: on a peine à suivre la pensée divine dans les enveloppes que lui prête la pensée humaine; mais c'est toujours la pensée divine (*OC*, 4:114).

Even false dogmas, such as metempsychosis, are merely disfigured truths. Ballanche suggests that in antiquity itself the initiates of the Mystery religions were taught the divine truths otherwise masked by corrupted traditions.⁷²

The general traditions comprise a *christianisme antérieur*.⁷³ While historical Christianity fully manifested true religion (the principle of religious equality) for the first time, its content was already contained in the traditions. Ballanche's notion that "les mystères du christianisme sont cachés dans toutes les cosmogonies"⁷⁴ applies preformationism to religion: Christianity is not something totally new in the world; rather, it is the fully evolved form of the universal religion that has been unfolding since earliest times. "Nous enseignons", declares the hierophant in *Ville des Expiations*: "tout le christianisme, le christianisme avant et après la manifestation qu'il a plu à Dieu de nous donner dans le temps, mais qui est éternel comme son auteur, car la même parole qui a fait le ciel et la terre s'est faite homme pour sauver les hommes".⁷⁵ A few pages later, he explicitly confirms the unity of anterior Christianity and historical Christianity when he explains that the sages of the *Ville des Expiations* teach "deux théosophies, celle qui est fondée sur le christianisme historique, et celle qui est fondée sur le christianisme contenu dans les traditions générales du genre humain".⁷⁶ *Orphée* and *Formule générale* are predicated on the idea of this universal anterior Christianity:

Je ne veux qu'ajouter un mot, et ce mot est une pensée qui doit se reproduire sans cesse: exprimée ou non, elle doit être présente partout, se reproduire en quelque sorte dans toutes les phrases de la *Palingénésie*;

⁷² *OC*, 4:329.

⁷³ *OC*, 6:60, 268, 280.

⁷⁴ *OC*, 5:185. See also *VE*, 112.

⁷⁵ *VE*, 110.

⁷⁶ *VE*, 116.

c'est que le christianisme non seulement est le but auquel doit tendre l'humanité, mais encore que ses mystères, contenus déjà dans toutes les traditions du monde primitif, n'ont jamais cessé d'être l'arôme incorruptible dont furent toujours, intimement et dans leur essence propre, imprégnées les traditions secondaires et même les religions successives (*OC*, 4:155).

The content of the general traditions of humanity, finally, is nothing other than the component parts of Ballanche's own palingenetic Christianity:

En un mot, le haut domaine de la Providence sur les affaires humaines, sans que nous cessions d'agir dans une sphère de liberté; l'empire de lois invariables régissant éternellement, aussi bien que le monde physique, le monde idéal, et même le monde civil et politique; le perfectionnement successif, l'épreuve selon le temps et les lieux, et toujours l'expiation; l'homme se faisant lui-même, dans son activité sociale comme dans son activité individuelle: n'est-ce point ainsi que l'on peut caractériser la religion générale du genre humain, dont les dogmes plus ou moins formels, plus ou moins obscurcis, reposent dans toutes les croyances (*OC*, 4:11)?

All ancient peoples preserved the promise of a Mediator.⁷⁷ Indeed, the human race is identical in all ages precisely because all ages have the same intimate sentiment of the Mediator.⁷⁸ This is another aspect of Ballanche's fundamental doctrine of the identity of the Fall and rehabilitation: "En un mot, le dogma du Médiateur . . . repose sur cette doctrine que l'homme ne pouvait être régénéré que par des moyens qui lui fussent identiques".⁷⁹ Moreover, since rehabilitation was contained within the Fall, the promise of Mediation was not just expectation. Mediation began to be accomplished from the morrow of the Fall through social evolution. All those who, like Orpheus, have assisted in the unfolding of social evolution rank as Mediators between God and fallen humanity. Ballanche here historicizes the venerable typological approach to pagan myth. In so doing, however, he undermines orthodoxy. Since the work of rehabilitation occurs in history, Christ's pagan analogues do not merely point to Christ, they actively commence the work of rehabilitation; redemption begins before the manifestation of the archetype.

Ballanche attempts to forestall accusations of heterodoxy against

⁷⁷ *OC*, 4:32, 72, 352; *VH*, 144.

⁷⁸ *VH*, 203; *VE*, 133.

⁷⁹ *VE*, 17.

his idea of an anterior Christianity by arguing that the first Christians themselves did not disdain the general traditions. The early Church Fathers and the leaders of the great pagan schools, he claims, realized that they sought the same truth. Regrettably, as Christianity became established the misplaced zeal of the rigidly orthodox cut Christianity off from the traditions. Nevertheless, the true Christian traditions have never been separated from the general traditions of the human race. Indeed, one aspect of the mission of the new social order to which *Palingénésie sociale* points is to overcome the separation between Christianity and the general traditions and thereby re-establish the continuity of the religious history of humanity.⁸⁰

It is instructive to compare the treatment of non-Christian religions in *Palingénésie sociale* with Ballanche's intentions for *La Foi promise aux gentils* in 1809. This early work, we recall, was to have recounted the story of a young Greek who, learning of the coming of a new religion, searched throughout the ancient world until he recognized in Christianity the promised faith. While *Orphée* also promises a new faith to the gentile peoples, its anterior Christianity does far more than dimly foreshadow Christianity because the general traditions actually accomplish social evolution by effecting successive initiation. The ancient world of *Orphée* does not have to await the truths of Christianity because these truths are already actively, if obscurely, at work. The general traditions *are* the faith promised to the Gentiles.

A. J. L. Busst has argued that the place of honour accorded to Christ in *Vision d'Hébal* arises from the fact that *Vision* recounts the history of humanity and for Ballanche the Mediation is not only the most important event of this history, but dominates it from beginning to end.⁸¹ The Mediation does indeed dominate history, but only in Ballanche's special sense whereby Mediation as a historical process receives primacy over Christ the Mediator as the sole and sufficient saviour. In fact, the centrality of Christ to *Vision d'Hébal* obscures, perhaps deliberately, the heterodox christology of *Palingénésie sociale* as a whole. When Ballanche speaks of a Médiateur or Réparateur, therefore, he does not mean the crucified God/man, who by his death cancels humanity's sin, but rather any initiator who, through the transmission of the general traditions of human

⁸⁰ OC, 4:53–54, 57. It is hardly surprising that Ballanche's favourite Church Fathers were Origen and Clement of Alexandria.

⁸¹ Busst in *VH*, 182.

race, initiates a particular society into a higher level of civilization and thereby accomplishes another social evolutionary stage in the rehabilitation of the human race. Humanity does not need to be redeemed from sin; it already is, according to the doctrine of the identity of the Fall and rehabilitation, only its redemption has not yet been fully worked out in history. Christ is a Mediator not because of his death but because of his transmission of the knowledge of religious equality that inaugurated the plebeian age. There is, as Paul Bénichou has noted, a basic contradiction between a philosophy of evolution, which implies continuous progress since the origins of humanity, and the dramatic orthodox dogma that breaks a long condemnation with a sudden deliverance. Ballanche could not incorporate a doctrine of evolution into Christianity without sacrificing something of its dogma.⁸²

Ballanche's dissolution of the uniqueness of Christ in the conception of humanity as its own Mediator is a corollary of his historiosophy. We have seen that the Illuminists' doctrine of emanation means that, except for Saint-Martin, the Incarnation is not really necessary to the process of reintegration because the divine forces are already at work in the universe. Ballanche shares the christological ambiguity of the Illuminists, but it now arises from his identification of the historical process as the locus of the spiritual rehabilitation of humanity. While the characteristic Illuminist combination of correspondences and emanationism reappears in later French Romanticism (for example, Gérard de Nerval's *Vers dorés* and Baudelaire's *Correspondences*),⁸³ Ballanche himself rejected emanationist creationism and instead guaranteed the web of correspondences that nets the cosmos by means of the idea of pre-established harmony derived from Leibnitz via Bonnet (see chapter Nine).

⁸² Paul Bénichou, *Le Temps des prophètes* (Paris: Gallimard, 1977), 87, 90.

⁸³ Frank Paul Bowman, "The Theory of Harmonies" in *French Romanticism* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1990), 126.

PART FOUR

JULY AND FAME

Tout cela est dû à la sève religieuse qui est dans mes écrits, et tout cela me montre la soif qu'on a d'une direction religieuse.

Ballanche to Récamier

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

THE SPHINX OF THE BARRICADES

Ballanche's reflections on Restoration France in *Palingénésie sociale* pick up his analysis of the contemporary age of end and renewal from the 1818–1820 works, while placing it in the context of social evolution and initiation. Ballanche's post-1830 additions to *Ville des Expiations* and *Vision d'Hébal* incorporate the July Revolution into the social evolutionary schema of his historiosophy.

The Restoration betrayed

In *Prolégomènes* Ballanche remarks, applying his teleological model of development to himself: “*L’Essai sur les Institutions sociales*, que je publiai en 1818, contient déjà [sic] un germe fécond; ce germe s’est développé avec les événements et avec mes propres méditations”.¹ What were these germinative events and meditations?

Plusieurs années d’études historiques, d’observations de tout genre; les circonstances extraordinaires qui depuis 1814 ont mûri à-la-fois toutes les populations de notre Europe, demeurée jusqu’alors à différents âges de la société, circonstances qui ont si prodigieusement accéléré la marche de l’esprit humain; sans doute aussi un voyage que je viens de faire en Italie: tout a réagi sur moi (*OC*, 4:23–24).

The historical studies in question are above all Ballanche's Italian researches of 1823–1825. The extraordinary circumstances alluded to are the revolutions in Greece, Italy (Naples and Piedmont), and Spain in the 1820s. Several of the “Réflexions diverses” collected at the end of the sixth volume of *Oeuvres complètes* (1833) discuss these revolutions. (Perhaps this material would have been included in *Elégie*, had Ballanche written it.) Ballanche interprets each of the revolutions as the accession to liberty of a hitherto oppressed people.² This

¹ *OC*, 4:23. Also 4:384.

² On Italy and Spain, see “Réflexions” XXIII, XXXII and XXXIII in *OC*, 6:312–313, 349–355. Also *Institutions sociales*, *OC*, 2:62–63. On Greece, see “Réflexion” XXX in *OC*, 6:343–346.

reading clearly echoes Ballanche's interpretation of the French Revolution as inaugurating a new stage of social evolution. Here, moreover, his progressivist interpretation of revolution is not troubled by the destructive aspect of French Revolution because there is no question of a society tearing itself apart. The Greek and Italian revolutionaries overthrew (or sought to overthrow) foreign oppressors (Ottoman Turks and Austrians, respectively); in the case of Spain, it is an outside power, France itself, that opposes revolution. Ballanche shared the opinion, held by both Ultras and Liberals, that the French invasion of Spain in 1823, ordered by the Villèle Government and in which first Mathieu de Montmorency then Chateaubriand were deeply involved, was intended to force the French counter-Revolution on Spain. Ultras, that is, having failed for the moment to rescind the Charter, had simply shifted the focus of their attack onto the more vulnerable Spanish Constitution. The intervention in Spain was in fact an indirect attack on the Charter.³ Ballanche joins the Liberals in condemning the invasion; yet, just as his understanding of liberty and progress differed from that of the Liberals, so his defence of the Spanish Revolution was based on his own theory of providentially-directed social evolution.

In sum, the series of revolutions in the 1820s signified to Ballanche that Europe has completed the long process of gradual disengagement from its initiatory tutelage and is now called to govern itself. Human social ideas have matured sufficiently so that the peoples of Europe are capable of governing themselves in accord with the will of providence. The European revolutions, in fact, introduce the consummation of plebeian evolution; initiation is about to become universal and all patriciates will soon disappear as the Christian law of religious equality is fully extended into civil society. The contemporary age of crisis is drawing to a close as humanity accedes to another degree in the great initiation that has lasted since the beginning of history.⁴ In earlier times, Ballanche observes, only a small proportion of society was progressive. Now, as indicated by the European revolutions, the masses have become progressive and only a small albeit powerful elite remains regressive, though ultimately it too will be overcome. Similarly, ini-

³ "Réflexion" XXXII in *OC*, 6:349–354. For Ultra and Liberal interpretations of the French invasion of Spain, see Stanley Mellon, *The Political Uses of History* (Stanford: Stanford UP, 1958), 44–47.

⁴ *OC*, 4:362, 367, 370.

tiation is no longer restricted to the few; it is the right of all because the time has come for the law of religious equality to be fully extended into civil society. In Christian nations, this process would already be complete had it been understood that social progress is fundamentally religious. Sadly, liberty has become detached from religion. At present, the forces of reaction, recognizing the religious nature of society, have proclaimed themselves the champions of providence, while the progressive party, in the manner of ancient Athenian democrats, relies solely on human will, and even, because of their enemies' abuse of religion, rebels against all religious principles. Providence, therefore, is faced with a double threat: Ultra abuse of religion and Liberal irreligion. The task facing the nations of Europe today is to recognize, and embody in their civil institutions, the progressive nature of Christianity.⁵

One of the duties of the college of theosophs of the Ville des Expiations is to direct the progress of contemporary Europe toward greater liberty. Though lacking coercive power, the sages exercise "une force secrète et bienfaisante qui ne repose jamais", by means of which they regulate the dynasties of Europe so that social progress neither stagnates nor rushes into premature revolution.⁶ The theosophs also judge those in power (cf. the trials of Egyptian kings in *Orphée*). The sages of the Ville des Expiations plan to establish colonies in Italy in order to assist its regeneration. Italy has fallen into decadence; decadence and barbarism are similar, however, so that their mission parallels that of Orpheus in Samothrace. That is, the sages will have to recommence the struggle against nature as a first step in re-establishing the conditions required for social evolution. Providence will assist this process, not this time through the arrival of some new Orpheus but by means of the transmission of industry and scientific agriculture. Projects such as the draining of the Pontine marshes recommence the never-ending struggle against nature, only this time, in accord with the present stage of social evolution, arable land will be conquered not from other peoples but from wilderness and pestilence. Ballanche conceives of industry as playing an important role in the current stage of social evolution because, by cementing the abolition of servitude, it abolishes forever the division of society into castes and helps render concrete in society the Christian law of equality.⁷

⁵ *OC*, 4:278-280.

⁶ *VE*, 118.

⁷ *VE*, 120-122.

Similarly, the initiatory structure of the *Ville des Expiations* incorporates provisions for public health.⁸

Ballanche describes all those who, for whatever reason, have lagged behind social evolution as barbarians. *Palingénésie sociale*, in fact, contains two distinct sets of ideas about barbarism. The first set, found in *Orphée*, is linked to Ballanche's notion of the primitive. The second set, found in *Ville des Expiations*, pertains to contemporary France.⁹ Primitive, we recall, carries a positive valorization for Ballanche as close to, and still reflecting, the divine purpose in creating humanity. *Orphée* repeatedly links the term "barbarian" and its cognates to primitive wisdom: "barbarian" is a vague expression referring to the unknown source of Gentile wisdom; barbarian mysteries are profound intuitions, religious expressions of unfathomable origin; barbarian language is sacred language; Barberia is the mystical name of Italy; Plato and Pythagoras derived their philosophies from barbarian wisdom.¹⁰ Occasionally the term is used to designate the brutish inhabitants of Samothrace or Thrace.¹¹ Upon close inspection, such usage always issues from the mouth of a Greek. While Ballanche allows the characters of his epic to rehearse the standard Greek/barbarian opposition where dramatically appropriate, Ballanche himself refers to the admittedly brutish Samothracians and Thracians as "Pelasgians",¹² reserving "barbarian" to denote primitive, in the esoteric sense.

Ville des Expiations presents a very different set of ideas about barbarism. In future existences, Ballanche notes, individuality will be perfected; in this existence, individuality must function within society. This is a delicate situation, full of pitfalls, and the misuse of individuality often produces evils. Some people are not yet prepared to negotiate the balance between society and individuality. These people, that is to say, those who have been left behind by social progress, must recommence their social education since that which they have hitherto received has proven insufficient. The *Ville des Expiations* has been founded for these people, as much as for criminals. More-

⁸ *VE*, 120–122.

⁹ On Ballanche's place in early nineteenth-century French thought about barbarism, see the chapter, "Palingénésie et barbarie: Ballanche" in Pierre Michel, *Un Mythe romantique: Les Barbares, 1789–1848* (Lyon: Presses Universitaires de Lyon, 1981), 169–192.

¹⁰ *OC*, 5:7, 11, 28, 39, 87, 256, 264.

¹¹ For example, *OC*, 5:104, 273, 294.

¹² *OC*, 5:191.

over, since criminal activity, in Ballanche's view, results from a failure to understand the providential nature of society, criminals too lag behind social evolution. *Ville des Expiations* applies the term barbarian to all those who, for whatever reason, have lagged behind social evolution.¹³ While, no doubt, there have always been people left behind the society in which they lived, the greater the proportion of humanity participating in society, that is, the further plebeian evolution advances, the greater the number of those left behind. Since one must have the capability of participating in society in order to be left behind, the number of laggards was small in the patrician age when entire classes were excluded from responsibility. This was also the case, despite Christianity, during the *ricorso* of patrician times in the feudal Middle Ages. Only now has the Christian law of equality sufficiently penetrated civil society to raise large numbers to responsibility and hence to the possibility of lagging behind the age.¹⁴

Ballanche believes that contemporary society must attempt to civilize its barbarians, to reintegrate them into society by reawakening in them the moral sentiment.¹⁵ To this end, society must reimpose on them the yoke of solidarity, though with the understanding that this austere yoke will be transformed, through a series of *épreuves* and initiations, into the gentle bond of charity. As a recommencement of primitive society, a recreation of an ancient social organization, the *Ville des Expiations* will be a human approximation of the divine mysteries of social evolution. The *Ville des Expiations* re-establishes the power of the traditions and the immutable, inflexible law of the patrician age because contemporary circumstances necessitate the construction of a simulacrum of the conditions of the early stages of social evolution. The progressive principle is held in reserve in the depths of the institution (the esoteric City), for it is never absent from human societies. Ballanche is not proposing that the *Ville des Expiations* reproduce the sequence of the three ages of humanity; it need only permit the rediscovery in evolutionary humanity of the cosmogonic humanity that is always present in all phases of evolution.¹⁶

In the great crises that accompany palingenetic ages, the primitive problem of the acquisition of responsibility is reposed in all its force.

¹³ *VE*, 27. See also *OC*, 4:344.

¹⁴ *VE*, 32.

¹⁵ *VE*, 41.

¹⁶ *VE*, 27-30.

Those who succumb to the *épreuves* of these ages become *hommes sans noms*; that is, those who misinterpret the mission of their ages reenact the Fall, and subsequently must undergo progressive expiation according to the law of the identity of the Fall and rehabilitation.¹⁷ The regicide of *L'Homme sans nom*, drawn from the most recent palin-genetic age, stands for the expiatory suffering endemic to all palin-genetic ages. Conversely, as Ballanche declares in the preface to its second (1828) edition, *L'Homme sans nom* receives its full significance only in the context of the system of ideas of *Palingénésie sociale*.¹⁸

Ballanche's discussion of contemporary barbarians leads him to Montlosier's Two Frances theory. Like conventional penal practice, Montlosier's theory is false because it fails to see that those whom Montlosier condemns as barbarians need only to be civilized. There really were two peoples in France before 1789, Ballanche agrees, a dominant but corrupt old race and a servile, barbarous new race. In the French Revolution, the barbarians overthrew the corrupt society of Louis XIV and Louis XV with the help of two great geniuses. Voltaire demolished the ancient order of things, while Rousseau, by his theories of social contract and individualism, gave laws to the hitherto lawless barbarians. Unfortunately, because Rousseau did not know the palin-genetic philosophy that governs human societies, he was a missionary of end times only; his gospel lacked the promise of renewal. In the Revolution, then, inasmuch as their notion of civilization was drawn from Rousseau, the barbarians acted before being truly civilized. In the absence of a true civilizing force, such as Fénelon, class war anachronistically usurped gradual, co-operative initiation as the agent of social evolution.¹⁹

While the miseries of the Revolutionary era may largely be attributed to this usurpation, Ballanche considers the ideology of the Revolution to be less of a threat to Restoration society than those who would turn back the clock. Post-Revolutionary society, above all the political culture based on the Charter, has begun to civilize new France by integrating it into the social order. New France, in other words, is emerging from barbarism by means of the social institutions of the Restoration. The real danger to the Restoration comes from the Ultras who want to reimpose an obsolete absolutism on France, thereby

¹⁷ *OC*, 3:356–357.

¹⁸ *OC*, 3:158–159.

¹⁹ *VE*, 49.

annulling the social evolutionary advance inaugurated by the Revolution and institutionalized in the Charter. Such attempts are pointless in any case because an accomplished revolution can be neither annulled nor recommenced. The Charter (and providence) have sanctioned a bourgeois society for France.²⁰ Ultras have been left behind by social evolution. Inasmuch as Ballanche defines barbarians as those who lag behind social evolution, it is not Montlosier's new France but the Ultras who comprise the barbarians of contemporary society. The *Ville des Expiations* is to accomplish for the anachronistic Ultras, as for all others left behind by the age, the social integration that the Charter is effecting for the impatient Revolutionaries. Ballanche's defence of the Charter and attack on the Ultras in *Ville des Expiations* corresponds to the historiographic battles of the early Restoration and is a good example of *Ville des Expiations* being written for a Restoration audience, despite being published under the July Monarchy.

The reflections on Joseph de Maistre in *Prolégomènes*, which serve as an introduction not only to *Ville des Expiations* but also to the unwritten *Élégie*, continue Ballanche's offensive against Ultra opponents of the Restoration. Depicting Maistre as a representative of a dying order who confused memories with prescience, Ballanche cheekily imagines a posthumous recantation on Maistre's part: "Maintenant qu'il voit la vérité face à face, sans doute il reconnaît que ses rêves furent ceux d'un évocation brillante, mais stérile et sans puissance".²¹ After reiterating the judgement of *Institutions sociales* on the regressive absolutism of Louis XIV and his suppression of Fénelon's attempt to extend Christian emancipation into the civil sphere, Ballanche links Maistre to the Sun King by designating the Savoyard as *le prophète du passé*. This epithet has enjoyed so wide a success that it has been drained of any specific meaning. Here, however, we may see the exact sense in which Ballanche intended it: Maistre is a prophet of the past because he sought to return France to an obsolete social order. Immediately after his reference to Maistre, Ballanche hails Fénelon, the advocate of the extension of Christian religious equality into the civil realm, as *le prophète de l'avenir*.²² Though it is left to the

²⁰ *VE*, 49–50.

²¹ *OC*, 4:289.

²² *OC*, 4:293. This is the only place where Ballanche so designates Fénelon. Maistre is called "le prophète du passé" in 4:289, 294, 295, 301 and "l'apôtre du passé" in 4:310, 327, 337, 347. Ferdinand Denis refers to Ballanche, vis-à-vis Maistre, as "l'apôtre de l'Avenir". Denis, *Journal, 1829–1848* (Paris: Plon, 1932), 47.

reader to contrast Maistre with Fénelon, Ballanche's meaning is clear enough: Maistre's advocacy of regressive absolutism betrayed the duty of governments to be the initiators of their peoples and set him against the providential evolution of society outlined by Fénelon. Maistre's writings are the swan-song of an expiring social order.²³ Not only was Maistre socially regressive, but, since for Ballanche society and religion are inseparable, Maistre was, surprising as it sounds, anti-Christian. The point is not, of course, that Maistre opposed the Church in the manner of the dechristianization campaign of the Revolution, but that he opposed the latest stage of the extension of the Christian principle of religious equality into the civil sphere. Maistre, in sum, withheld from the people the benefits due them relative to their stage of social evolution and in so doing betrayed the emancipatory heart of Christianity.²⁴

Ballanche's attitude toward Lamennais echoes his critique of Maistre. While Ballanche and Lamennais agreed that religion is fundamental to political life, and that the truths of Christianity had been known, albeit imperfectly, in the various religious systems of antiquity, Lamennais, to Ballanche's mind, refused to draw the obvious implications from these common principles: "Si M. de La Mennais sentait aussi bien que moi, par exemple, l'autorité et la puissance des traditions, il ne les défendrait pas ainsi. Pour ne vouloir de rien concéder au temps où nous vivons, il refuse d'admettre ce qui est de tous les temps".²⁵ What Lamennais lacked was a sense of the progressive nature of Christianity. While Christianity, as the consummation of the general traditions of the human race, is the final revelation, its full significance

²³ OC, 4:294. Compare Ballanche on Maistre with Heinrich Heine on Friedrich Schlegel: "Fr. Schlegel was a man of profound mind. He recognized all the glories of the past, and he felt all the sufferings of the present. But he did not understand the sacredness of these sufferings and the necessity of them for the future salvation of the world. . . . Fr. Schlegel once called the historian 'a prophet in retrospect.' This is the best description of himself. He hated the present, the future frightened him, and his inspired prophetic gaze penetrated to the past, which he loved. Poor Fr. Schlegel, he did not see in the sufferings of our time the sufferings of rebirth but the agony of dying, and from fear of death he fled to the tottering ruins of the Catholic Church." Heine, *The Romantic School* (1834) in *Heinrich Heine: Selected Works*, trans. Helen Mustard (New York: Random House, 1973), 182.

²⁴ OC, 4:298.

²⁵ Ballanche to Récamier, 10 September 1820, in Jean-René Derré, "Ballanche et Lamennais" in *Littérature et Politique dans l'Europe du XIX^e Siècle* (Lyon: Presses Universitaires de Lyon, 1986), 177. The identical sentences appear in Ballanche to Amélie Récamier, 6 September 1820, in Agnès Kettler, *Lettres de Ballanche à Madame Récamier, 1812-1845* (Paris: Champion, 1996), 760.

has yet to be understood and so our understanding of it must evolve. Thus, while Ballanche praises the efforts of Lamennais, as of other Ultras, for his struggle against the impious philosophy of the eighteenth century, he sharply criticizes him in "Réflexion XXIX" for failing to recognize the necessity of a reformed Catholicism capable of embracing the popular liberties essential to modern societies.²⁶ In his private correspondence, Ballanche contrasts Lamennais, "le serviteur du Destin", with himself, "le libre apôtre de la providence divine".²⁷ In his published works, this notion appears in "Réflexion XVI", where Lamennais is linked with Lord Byron as an opponent of Christian emancipation.²⁸ This rather cryptic passage may be clarified by noting that Ballanche has here condensed a longer discussion from his unpublished 1823 review of Fabre d'Olivet's translation of Byron's *Cain: A Mystery*. In the review, Ballanche explains that Ultras like Lamennais make Christianity into a static, oppressive power, rather than the progressive, emancipatory faith it truly is. Faced with the oppressive Christianity of the Ultras, the natural response is rebellion; hence the impious works of Byron. The dire consequence of systems such as those of Lamennais and Maistre is to propagate the spirit of irreligiosity.²⁹

Maistre and Lamennais were certainly not alone in obstructing the unfolding of social evolution. Ballanche laments that the progressive mission of the Restoration was utterly misunderstood by those who ought to have directed it. In *Prolegomènes* he once again cautions the Bourbon regime, reiterating the duties of rulers laid down in his 1818–1820 works. The sanction of power is the consent of the ruled; in times of crisis, this sanction is weakened and a dynasty's title to power questioned. When initiateables, that is, have learned all that an initiator can teach them, a social transformation occurs and social evolution takes a step forward. Dynasties that refuse to acknowledge social transformation by failing to enshrine the new order in law create, and amnesty in advance, revolt. Power, whatever Maistre may have said, is infallible only on condition of being the true expression of the providential evolution of society.³⁰

²⁶ OC, 6:342–343.

²⁷ Ballanche to Récamier, 5 March 1825, in Kettler, *Lettres de Ballanche à Madame Récamier*, 547.

²⁸ OC, 6:298.

²⁹ BML, MSS 1806–1810, Dossier 19.

³⁰ OC, 4:281–284.

In late March 1830 Ballanche reflects anxiously on the implications for social evolution of the reactionary measures enacted by the Polignac ministry. In language taken directly from the *Élégie* of 1820, he warns Charles X that Polignac's regressive policies endanger the dynasty by setting the regime against the progressive march of providence. Ballanche urges the King, in the name of the Charter, to dismiss Polignac and dedicate the dynasty to the good of the people:

Que la Royauté descende de ses hauteurs pour dissiper ce nuage de déception et de malveillance qu'un ministère privé de sympathie élève autour d'elle, pour la séparer du pays; et je pourrai dire comme je disais en 1814, dans l'épilogue de l'*Antigone*: "Nos dieux domestiques nous sont rendus" ("Neuvième Fragment", *OC*, 1:384)!

Of course, Charles X and Polignac continued their reactionary policies, which culminated in the issuance on 25 July 1830 of the Four Ordinances restricting the press and subverting recent electoral results. Three days of street fighting in Paris on 27, 28, and 29 July realized Ballanche's fears: the Restoration was overthrown, and with it the Charter.

Several addenda to the *Essais de Palingénésie sociale* composed in the early 1830s record Ballanche's interpretation of the July Revolution. In the 1833 Post-script to the preface to *Institutions sociales* Ballanche observes that Charles X's continued support of Polignac necessitates the conclusion that those in power had fallen victim to a spirit of reaction that had extinguished all intelligence, sympathy, and liberty.³¹ The July Revolution resulted inevitably from the Bourbons' failure to recognize and champion the direction in which providence was moving society. Deprived of wise leadership, the French people established through violence legal recognition of the stage of social evolution to which they had acceded but which the Bourbons refused to acknowledge. *Vision d'Hébal*, echoing the 1820 *Élégie*, apostrophizes the fallen dynasty: "Maison de France, tu as voulu conserver l'antique fatalité dont la Providence avait résolu de t'affranchir, parce qu'elle avait résolu d'en affranchir le monde".³² And finally, in an 1834 article Ballanche observes that the Bourbons failed to recognize the transitional nature of the Restoration:

Un régime transactionnel entre le passé et l'avenir avait été donné à la France, non pour retenir quelques lambeaux du passé, mais pour

³¹ *OC*, 2:10.

³² *VH*, 223.

introduire l'Europe dans les voies de l'avenir. Et le régime transactionnel, initiation préparatoire, n'a pu s'identifier avec la vieille royauté française.³³

Ballanche's valediction to the Restoration, dated 31 December 1830, appears as the final post-script to the 1833 *Oeuvres complètes*. The Restoration regime, he repeats, failed to recognize its mission; in place of directing social initiation, it tried to make it regress. The restored Bourbons betrayed the Charter and the principle of legitimacy. Nevertheless, Ballanche's conviction of the providential nature of the Charter makes him forever a man of the Restoration:

L'époque de la Restauration, quoique devenue une époque transitoire, restera néanmoins une grande époque qui ne saurait s'évanouir de nos idées et de notre mémoire. Sa trace profonde, son empreint métaphysique, je ne dois point vouloir les effacer de mes écrits. C'est la Restauration qui m'a tout enseigné (*OC*, 6:358–359).

July and social evolution

The July Revolution again set the members of the Abbaye-aux Bois salon at odds with one other. Chateaubriand, even though he had been dropped from the Government after disagreements with Villèle, was irrevocably committed to the elder branch of the Bourbons. He, along with the Montmorencys and many other of Juliette Récamier's older friends, saw his public career in ruins. It was for this reason that Récamier perceived the Revolution as "un événement douloureux et fatal".³⁴ The younger, Liberal members of her salon, such as J.-J. Ampère and Charles Lenormant, welcomed the Revolution and the Orleanist regime as a step forward in the march of liberty. Once again Récamier played the role of reconciler between the two parties and her salon survived the difficult period without schism.

And what of Ballanche? Pierre-Simon was in Dieppe taking the waters with Récamier that summer. When news of the July Days broke, he hastened back to Paris. As chance would have it, from Rouen to Paris he shared a carriage with Sainte-Beuve. According to the critic, Ballanche was very calm and seemed little interested in

³³ Ballanche, "Le Dix-neuvième siècle" in *La France catholique* 2 (1834): 3.

³⁴ Amélie-Cyvoct Lenormant, *Souvenirs et correspondances tirés des papiers de Madame Récamier*, 2 vols. (Paris: Lévvy, 1860), 2:392.

the news from Paris.³⁵ But this air of detachment is misleading. True, Ballanche had cautioned, from the *Elégie* on, that the Bourbons' abuses would lead to their downfall, but the manner of Charles' fall troubled him sorely:

Quand à moi, ma thèse est bien faite, j'ai renoncé à une de mes idées, celle qui a rempli ma vie. J'ai cru à la possibilité du progrès par la voie d'*évolution*, mais je vois bien à présent qu'il n'en est point ainsi dans les choses humaines, et qu'elles procèdent par la voie de *révolution*.³⁶

Scenes added to *Ville des Expiations* show Ballanche continuing to work out his reaction to the events of July.³⁷ In one such scene, Ballanche depicts a counsellor of Charles X as having belonged to a secret society established to make the age regress. This man, learned in the traditions of the Orient, wanted to reconstruct the Orient in the West by smothering the struggle between the principle of progress and the principle of stasis in a majestic unity. Derré et al., noting that the anonymous counsellor was not intended as a cipher for Eckstein or any other historical person, cite Ballanche's manuscript testimony to his purely allegorical status: "Je concentrerai dans ce personnage allegorique tout l'esprit réactionnaire qui a produit l'expulsion de Charles X".³⁸ *Ville des Expiations* condemns Charles X and those around him for forgetting the emancipatory character of Christianity. Their reactionary policies manifested the decrepitude of an expiring dynasty.³⁹ In his judgement on Charles X, Ballanche draws on the relationship between rulers and their societies that he worked out in the 1818–1820 works. All that has changed is the mood. Whereas in the earlier works, especially *Elégie*, he was urgently warning the Bourbons that their reactionary policies placed them in opposition to providence, he now reflects resignedly that their failure to renounce reaction and embrace progress made their fall inevitable. Charles X, Ballanche suggests in *Ville des Expiations*, will have to accomplish in the life to come the initiation he refused as King. The mysterious counsellor,

³⁵ Charles-Augustin Sainte-Beuve, *Portraits contemporains*, 5 vols. (Paris: Lévy, 1869–1871), 2:32.

³⁶ Ballanche to Récamier, undated [shortly after the July Days], in Lenormant, *Souvenirs et correspondances*, 2:393.

³⁷ Pierre Michel has remarked that "la *Ville* constitue la véritable réponse de Ballanche à la crise qui suit l'éclair de Juillet". P. Michel, "Ballanche et la Sphinx de Juillet" in *Romantisme* 39 (1983): 167.

³⁸ *VE*, 196, n. 171.

³⁹ *VE*, 135–136.

for his part, experiences a terrible revelation in the July Days. Belatedly realizing that he has misunderstood the progressive laws of providence and confused the Orient and the West, he throws himself into the Ville des Expiations, where, contrite, he is initiated into the true, emancipatory Christianity.⁴⁰

Ballanche worries that the recognition of progress accomplished in the July Revolution has been bought at a high cost because along with the Bourbons the July Revolution has overthrown the Charter. Without this providentially inspired document to direct society, Ballanche fears renewed suffering as France works through its new and hastily constructed legal order. The July Revolution was a palingenetic event, and even though Ballanche is ultimately optimistic he knows that as such it can only mean renewed suffering: "Maintenant de nouvelles initiations nous attendent; mais n'oublions pas que toute initiation est précédée d'une épreuve".⁴¹ Switching from the mechanics of social evolution to metaphor, Ballanche, in *Vision d'Hébal*, describes the July Revolution as the "Sphinx spontané des barricades", and wonders who will solve its riddle.⁴² The Sphinx appears sporadically in *Palingénésie sociale*, where she stands as at once a particular and a general symbol. Particularly, the Sphinx is the Theban sibyl;⁴³ that is, she embodies the death of the old order as Thebes accedes to a new stage of social evolution. Generally, the mystery of the Sphinx is the mystery of both humanity and dynasties. The riddle of the Sphinx, to which Oedipus correctly answered "man", signifies that the purpose of history is the rehabilitation of humanity; similarly, dynasties must direct their peoples in the process of rehabilitation and ally themselves with the needs of the age.⁴⁴ That the Sphinx destroys those who fail to solve her riddle signifies that those, like Erigone, who seek initiation prematurely must die. The Sphinx crouching on Mount Phiceus symbolizes the barrier to initiation.⁴⁵ Ballanche observes that the riddle of the Sphinx is reposed at every period of social transformation; hence, every age has its enigma to be divined.⁴⁶

⁴⁰ *VE*, 136.

⁴¹ *OC*, 6:359. See also 6:356–358, and 1:385.

⁴² *VH*, 223–224.

⁴³ *OC*, 4:21.

⁴⁴ *OC*, 6:76. See also 4:173; 5:262, 298–300.

⁴⁵ *OC*, 6:291.

⁴⁶ *OC*, 6:291. Once again, Heine seems to paraphrase Ballanche in *The Romantic School*: "Every epoch is a sphinx that plunges into the abyss as soon as its riddle has been solved". *Heinrich Heine: Selected Works*, 132.

Those special people who, like Oedipus, solve the riddle of their age are *êtres palingénésiques*. Whereas to the profane Oedipus simply emblemizes suffering (as in *Antigone*),⁴⁷ those who have been initiated into knowledge of the general traditions know that Oedipus symbolizes the conquest of initiation.⁴⁸

In a moment of optimism in February 1830 Ballanche declared that the Sphinx no longer crouches on Mount Phiceus because it has been vanquished by the new Oedipus, the genius of progression.⁴⁹ Ballanche had momentarily convinced himself that the Restoration, embodying the progressive principle, had at last overcome the terrors of the palingénetic age of the Revolution and firmly established the new social order. Tragically, the Bourbons' betrayal of the providential order and the consequent July Revolution have once again cast France into an age of crisis. French society must now solve the riddle of the age; that is, divine and accomplish the next stage of social evolution. Ballanche fears that the present riddle posed by the "Sphinx spontané des barricades" is particularly tricky because in the July Revolution French society has passed through two degrees of initiation at once.⁵⁰ This means that the degree of rehabilitation corresponding to the liberties acquired in the July Days was achieved without a preparatory *épreuve*. Great troubles await France as a result, though Ballanche is confident that the law of progress will ensure that harmony will be re-established in the end.

Ballanche's worries over the effects of the July events on the unfolding of social evolution are reflected "La Tapisserie-fée", or "The Enchanted Tapestry", a short story Ballanche published in *Revue de Paris* in 1832. "La Tapisserie-fée" narrates an incident purportedly experienced by Ballanche himself during his travels through the Venetian marches near Trieste. An inn-keeper tells Ballanche about an enchanted tapestry hanging nearby in an abandoned château. The tapestry, the work of a great fairy *magicienne*, is said to come to life from time to time, depicting in its scenes matters of great import for humanity. On learning that the château is to be demolished the very next day and that the tapestry is too fragile to move, Ballanche resolves

⁴⁷ OC, 1:42, 74.

⁴⁸ Ballanche, "Formule générale. Deuxième fragment. L'année 259 de Rome" in *Revue de Paris* 4 (1829): 135.

⁴⁹ Post-script to the Preface to *L'Homme sans nom*, OC, 3:169.

⁵⁰ VH, 224. Ballanche reproduces here his immediate reaction to the July Days, as reported by Sainte-Beuve. *Portraits contemporains*, 2:32.

to stand a vigil before the tapestry that night. The rest of the story recounts what he witnesses as, one last time, the tapestry comes to life.

Ballanche perceives, dimly at first and then more clearly, a thatched cottage, from which emerges a beautiful girl. The girl identifies herself as "la fille de la vision" (cf. Eurydice in *Orphée*), and her home as "la région qu'habite toute pensée avant d'être une pensée".⁵¹ The girl begins to pick flowers for two chaplets, one for the inevitable wise old man who is about to die, the other for her own wedding veil as she is to be married the next day. After the Christian death of the old man (cf. the death of the *Homme sans nom*), the girl, having told her fiancé that she wants to see the most distant horizon, climbs to the top of tower built on the summit of a high rock. Ballanche's repeated references to the girl as a sibyl remind the reader that the horizon in question is not one of space but of time; her vision is of the next palingenetic moment in the unfolding of the historical process. She sees two great armies about slaughter each other. The two armies represent the basic palingenetic struggle between the patriciate and plebeianism, between the principle of the Orient and the principle of the West. ("Tu sais cela aussi bien que moi", the girl coyly remarks to Ballanche, "puisque c'est ta pensée que j'exprime".)⁵² But the two armies will not come to blows; a leader will emerge who, by declaring the law of harmony, will establish a truce between the two sides (cf. *Völuspa* in *Orphée*). A new society will grow up under this law of harmony until, upon its maturity, a new future begins for humanity. Sprouting silver wings, the girl flies off in search of this leader in order to learn the law of harmony. Dawn breaks and the vision is lost amid the confusion of colours of the tapestry. The story ends with Ballanche musing to himself that humanity will one day undoubtedly reconquer its lost unity, but will this occur before humanity is freed from the bonds of space and time?

"La Tapisserie-fée" expresses the ambivalence with which Ballanche faced the July Monarchy, and the social order issuing from it. Like J.-J. Ampère and Charles Lenormant, he welcomes the extension of liberty it represents, but its revolutionary origin is incompatible with his political philosophy based on gradual change initiated from above. Ballanche is haunted by the threat of cataclysm, but allows himself to hope that wise leadership will not only avert catastrophe but inaugurate

⁵¹ Ballanche, "La Tapisserie-fée" in *Revue de Paris* 45 (1832): 229.

⁵² Ballanche, "La Tapisserie-fée", 232.

a golden age. And can there be any doubt as to the identity of the wise leader? The law of harmony is Ballanche's own theory of social palingenesis. The cautious optimism of "La Tapisserie-fée" is also found in Ballanche's letters from this period:

Ainsi je crois que nous allons passer quelque temps sous le régime des idées. Nous nous préparerons à une nouvelle initiation. Ce sera donc un temps de repos, qui sera fort bon pour l'étude et la philosophie. Je ne sais ce que durera ce temps d'arrêt, mais quelque peu de temps qu'il endure, il sera fort utile. Le progrès se fera par les idées au lieu de se faire par les émeutes. Lorsque les idées sont mûres, elles produiront tout naturellement les faits qui en seront l'expression juste. Vous savez que c'est en effet, selon moi, la marche vraie de l'humanité.⁵³

Cassandra in Mycenae

If Ballanche played the role of the Cassandra of the Restoration, happily no Clytemnestra awaited him in Mycenae. In fact, despite his ambivalence toward its genesis, the first years of the July Monarchy were the period of his greatest fame and influence. We will discuss why this was so in the next chapter; this section will look at publications by and on Ballanche in the years immediately following the July Revolution.

A few months before the July Revolution, Ballanche published his four-volume *Oeuvres* (reprinted in 1833 as *Oeuvres complètes*), comprising his major works, beginning with *Antigone*, and a few of his pre-1814 works. A review of the *Oeuvres* in the *Revue de Paris*, signed E. V., noted that Ballanche must be taken seriously as a philosopher as well as a writer: "La publication des *Oeuvres complètes* de M. Ballanche, événement plein d'intérêt pour le monde littéraire, produira une sensation non moins vive dans le monde philosophique. . . . Désormais on ne pourra séparer en M. Ballanche l'écrivain du philosophe. Il acquiert le droit d'être jugé tout entier".⁵⁴ In 1831 Ballanche detached the *Vision d'Hébal* from *Ville des Expiations* and published it separately as a token to the subscribers to *Palingénésie sociale* that he really was progressing on the remaining volumes. *Vision* was a critical success; Chateaubriand, Sainte-

⁵³ Ballanche to Récamier, 27 August 1832, in Kettler, *Lettres de Ballanche à Madame Récamier*, 582.

⁵⁴ E. V. "Variétés" in *Revue de Paris* (27 June 1830). Quoted in Albert Joseph George, *Pierre-Simon Ballanche* (Syracuse: Syracuse UP, 1945), 121.

Beuve, and others hailed it as a master-piece.⁵⁵ Whereas the *Oeuvres* of 1830 called attention to Ballanche's name, *Vision* finally made his literary reputation. Ballanche received official recognition in 1833 when François Guizot, as Ministre de l'Instruction publique, awarded him a literary pension of 1,800 francs. Ballanche, however, was loath to accept the pension because, firstly, he believed that there were other men of letters in greater need of financial assistance than himself and, secondly, his dislike for Guizot made him unwilling to be in any way beholden to the politician. In the end, Juliette Récamier, who had a far more realistic idea of the state of his finances than he did himself (for all its acclaim, publication of *Oeuvres* brought him little money), made it clear that she would be angry if he refused the pension.⁵⁶

Ballanche's letters to the comtesse d'Hautefeuille comprise an important source for his views and activities during the July Monarchy. Ballanche had first met Anne-Albe-Cornélie d'Hautefeuille (née de Beaurepaire, 1789–1862) in 1827. She had been entranced by *Antigone* and *Homme sans nom*, and was at this date eager to read Ballanche's new work, the first volume of *Palingénésie sociale*. On finding herself unable to procure a copy of the work owing to its small press run, Hautefeuille wrote directly to Ballanche. A few days later Ballanche appeared at her salon, exchanged a few words, and departed, leaving her a copy of *Prolegomènes*. Ballanche and Hautefeuille saw each other from time to time over the next few years, but it was not until after the July Revolution that they became close friends. They corresponded regularly throughout the 1830s, and Ballanche visited her when she was in Paris (she spent most of the year at her château at Saint-Vrain, Seine-et-Oise).⁵⁷ Although Ballanche often asked her opinion on his ideas, the tone of his letters to Hautefeuille is very much that of a master to a disciple. This is especially clear in comparison to the reverential tone of his letters to Récamier. Hautefeuille herself began to write under Ballanche's guidance during these years. Her best known work, *L'âme exilée* (1837), achieved a genuine success, and it was by this name that Chateaubriand and the other habitués of the Abbaye-aux-Bois salon rather sarcastically referred to Ballanche's friend and protégée.

⁵⁵ See George, *Pierre-Simon Ballanche*, 148–149.

⁵⁶ Lenormant, *Souvenirs et correspondances*, 2:515.

⁵⁷ Alfred Marquiset, *Ballanche et Mme. d'Hautefeuille. Lettres inédites* (Paris: Champion, 1912), 7–9. On Hautefeuille, see Kettler, *Lettres de Ballanche à Madame Récamier*, 177–183.

Ballanche talked of having found in Hautefeuille “une seconde Antigone”, but the comtesse was in no way a rival to the first for his heart.⁵⁸ Ballanche’s letters to Hautefeuille are full of news about Récamier, and, no doubt, he kept Récamier informed of events at Saint-Vrain. Though Ballanche dearly would have loved to see an intimate friendship grow up between the two women, Récamier, while grateful to Hautefeuille for her solicitude toward her friend, displayed no more than a formal politeness in her relations with her. Ballanche had to accept that there was no place for a rival, no matter how modest, in the Abbaye-aux-Bois circle. Hautefeuille, for her part, admired Ballanche’s illustrious friend enormously and was content to have “le plaisir de transformer Saint-Vrain en une succursale de l’Abbaye dont Ballanche fut le Chateaubriand”.⁵⁹ The comtesse not only cared for Ballanche during his lifetime, she also took it upon herself to safeguard his reputation after his death. To this end, she suppressed anything in those of Ballanche’s papers that were in her possession (although they seem to have belonged legally to Récamier’s heirs) that she deemed to be less than orthodox. In particular, she forbade the publication of a complete edition of *Ville des Expiations*. After her death, and following her directions, her husband donated Ballanche’s papers to the Bibliothèque Municipale de Lyon, according to the note signed by Victor de Laprade in BML, MSS 1806–1810, Dossier 1.

The newly famous Ballanche was in great demand during the early 1830s among the many literary and political journals that sprang up after the July Revolution. Given Ballanche’s customary dilatoriness in completing any work, it was impossible for him to answer each request for an article with a new piece of work, and, further, he was seriously ill for a large part of 1832 (although not with the cholera that swept through Paris that year). Ballanche’s solution was to offer excerpts from his unpublished works, in particular from *Ville des Expiations* and *Formule générale*. Thus sections of *Ville des Expiations* appeared in *La France Littéraire* (six excerpts, 1832–1835), *Journal des gens du monde* (1833), and *Revue du progrès social* (1834), while *Revue de Paris* (1829), *Le Siècle* (1833), and *L’Echo de la Jeune France* (1833–1834) published excerpts from *Formule générale*.

⁵⁸ Edouard Herriot, *Mme. Récamier et ses amis*, 2 vols. (Paris: Plon-Nourrit, 1909), 2:343.

⁵⁹ Marquiset, *Ballanche et Mme. d’Hautefeuille*, 264.

Ballanche did publish a few original works in the early 1830s, although even these pieces were gleaned from already existing notes: "La Tapisserie-fée" (1832) in *Revue de Paris*; "Noël" (1833) in *L'Echo de la Jeune France*; "Le Dix-neuvième siècle" (1834) in *La France catholique*; and "Chateaubriand: Mémoires" (1834) in *Revue européenne*. I have already discussed "La Tapisserie-fée". "Le Dix-neuvième siècle" is a concise summary of Ballanche's interpretation of the political, cultural, and religious history of France from the Reign of Terror to the fall of the Restoration.⁶⁰ In "Noël", a seasonal piece written for the December issue of *L'Echo de la Jeune France*, Ballanche glosses the lectionary readings for Christmas from Isaiah and the gospels in terms of his own ideas on the identity of the Fall and rehabilitation, humanity as a pilgrim on the earth, the Orient and the West, and the opposing principles of stasis and progress.⁶¹ The article on Chateaubriand,⁶² catering to the immense public interest occasioned by the open secret that the great man was reading excerpts from his memoirs (published posthumously as *Mémoires d'Outre-tomb*) to the Abbaye-aux-Bois circle, presents a scene from the uncompleted episode from Book VII of *Ville des Expiations*. On the model of the trial in Book VIII of *Orphée* wherein Egyptian priests judge royal dynasties, prominent rulers and politicians, philosophers, and religious figures of Ballanche's day are tried before a tribunal of hierophants, the *conseil ésotérique*, in order to determine the extent to which they furthered or hindered social evolution. Ballanche's introduction hails Chateaubriand as the genius who incarnates the contemporary struggle between the past and the future: "Aussi les Mémoires de l'illustre écrivain représenteront-ils vivement, parfaitement, poétiquement, la lutte du passé et de l'avenir, l'antagonisme des mœurs stables et des opinions progressives". Chateaubriand's memoirs, when published, will be "le résumé le plus merveilleusement et le plus dramatiquement fidèle de notre siècle".⁶³ The hierophants, for their part, assimilate Chateaubriand to Ballanche's Orphée: "N'est-ce pas là Chateaubriand? N'est-ce pas l'Orphée des jours nouveaux, l'homme aux deux voix qui se confondent dans la

⁶⁰ Ballanche, "Le Dix-neuvième siècle" in *La France catholique* 2 (1834): 1-3.

⁶¹ Ballanche, "Noël" in *L'Echo de la Jeune France* 1 (1833): 313-315.

⁶² Ballanche, "Chateaubriand: Mémoires" in *Revue européenne* 8 (1834): 227-241. Reprinted as "Les Mémoires de M. de Chateaubriand" in Derré, et al., *Dossier de La Ville des Expiations de Ballanche* (Paris: CNRS, 1981), 73-82.

⁶³ Both quotations from Ballanche, "Les Mémoires de M. de Chateaubriand", 73.

même parole”.⁶⁴ Ballanche’s lavish praise of Chateaubriand is not without a barb. By identifying Chateaubriand with Orpheus, Ballanche fixes him as a man of the past; just as *Ville des Expiations*, to which he claims to be putting final touches, supersedes *Orphée*, so Ballanche himself, not Chateaubriand, represents the future. This is how Ballanche endured the successes of his great rival; Chateaubriand basks in the adulation of the present, but the future will recognize Ballanche as the greater man.

The extent of Ballanche’s fame in the early 1830s is attested to by his appearances in the *Journal des gens du monde* and *Le Magasin pittoresque*. Whereas the journals hitherto discussed published substantial articles intended for the serious reader, these journals offered undemanding entertainment. The *Journal des gens du monde* (which appeared only in 1833 and 1834 and should not be confused with its earlier namesake) carried as its motto the words “Artiste. Fashionable” and featured articles on fashion and fashionable ideas, plus drawings of the latest in haute couture. Ballanche’s article, a short piece under the title “Esthétique”, is a compilation of passages from *Ville des Expiations* discussing aesthetics in terms of his ideas on expiation and social development. *Le Magasin pittoresque*, founded in 1833, was in its early years a weekly offering short, illustrated articles on a wide range of topics of general interest, among which were interspersed edifying quotations from famous moralists and religious writers. Ballanche’s debut in this journal, between an article on the cosmopolitanism of the French language and an illustrated piece on the zebra, was an aphorism about egoism in the number of the week of 30 March 1833. Another quotation from Ballanche appeared later that same year, and another in 1838, followed, after a space of several years by a few more in the early 1850s. Readers of these two journals would certainly not have read Ballanche’s works. His appearance in their pages demonstrates the extent to which Ballanche became a fashionable writer in the 1830s, one whom it was *de rigueur* to pretend to have read, if not actually to read.

In keeping with his popularity, Ballanche, whom the literary and intellectual elites of the Restoration had largely ignored, became the subject of numerous studies in the early 1830s. In addition to reviews of specific works, major articles on Ballanche appeared in the *Revue des Deux mondes*, *L’Echo de la Jeune France*, and *La France Littéraire*.

⁶⁴ Ballanche, “Les Mémoires de M. de Chateaubriand”, 76.

Ballanche's ideas were also discussed in two widely-read books, Chateaubriand's *Etudes historiques* and Jean-Philibert Damiron's *Essai sur l'Histoire de la philosophie en France au XIX^e siècle*.

The most detailed study of Ballanche's thought was also the first to appear. Auguste Barchou de Penhoën published in the April 1831 issue of the influential *Revue des Deux mondes* a lengthy article entitled "Essai d'une Formule Générale de l'Histoire de l'Humanité, d'après les idées de M. Ballanche". Barchou (1799–1855), who had been a schoolmate of Honoré de Balzac at the Collège de Vendôme before a career as an army officer, was an important figure in the introduction of German Idealist philosophy into France (his articles on Fichte and Schelling also appeared in *Revue des Deux mondes* in the early 1830s). He was also interested in Indian philosophy, and it is as a champion of Indic studies that he appears in Balzac's novel, *Louis Lambert*.⁶⁵ Barchou's excellent study traces the development of Ballanche's thought by analysing his works, beginning with *Antigone*, and the conditions under which they were written. After registering some mild criticisms regarding Ballanche's claim of universal applicability for his historical law of the division of ancient societies into patricians and plebeians, Barchou concludes by expressing the hope that his exposition of Ballanche's doctrines will allow its readers to share his ardent and empathetic admiration for their author.

Chateaubriand's lengthy preface to *Etudes historiques* (1831) presents a detailed historiographical account of virtually all previous treatments of the history of Rome. Discussing Ballanche immediately after, and linking him to, Herder and Vico, Chateaubriand sketches the principal features of Ballanche's philosophy of history. He mixes mild criticism with lavish praise.⁶⁶ Adolphe Mazure's 1834 article in *La France Littéraire*, in which he describes Ballanche as a theosoph (a positive term for Mazure) in whom are effortlessly combined a historian, a poet, and a metaphysician, outlines Ballanche's theory of social palingenesis and traces its development in his works. Mazure links Ballanche's doctrines to, while distinguishing them from, those of Vico, Maistre, Herder, and Bonnet. He concludes that Ballanche is a writer and social theorist of the first rank.

⁶⁵ On Barchou, see Arlette Michel, "A Propos de Barchou de Penhoën: Balzac, Ballanche, Schelling" in *L'Année balzacienne* (1969): 147–163.

⁶⁶ Chateaubriand, *Etudes historiques sur la chute de l'empire romain, la naissance et les progrès du christianisme, et l'invasion des barbares*, 4 vols. (Paris: 1831), 1:lix–lxiii.

J.-P. Damiron explains, in the second edition (1828) of his *Essai sur l'Histoire de la philosophie en France au XIX^e siècle*, the omission of Ballanche from the first edition (1828) of his study on the grounds that Ballanche is more of a historian and publicist than a philosopher. Without having changed his mind, he now considers the omission unjust and appends a discussion of Ballanche to his section on the theological school (Maistre, Lamennais, Bonald, Eckstein, and Saint-Martin). Damiron focusses on the successive development of the human spirit set out in *Institutions sociales*. After noting that Ballanche is more a man of sentiment than of system, he concludes with a lengthy quotation from Eckstein (*Le Catholique* [February 1828]) praising Ballanche as a religious thinker of great purity and depth.⁶⁷ In allowing Eckstein the last word on Ballanche, Damiron ducks the need for his own judgement. Yet, in the section immediately previous to his discussion of Ballanche, Damiron demonstrates the weaknesses and inadequacies of Eckstein's version of Transcendental Catholicism. Perhaps the reader is intended to infer Damiron's opinion of Ballanche from his judgement on Eckstein.⁶⁸ Damiron's third edition (1834) contains a 123 page Supplement in which Damiron brings his work up to date by considering the philosophical developments in France since 1828. In the nine pages of the Supplement devoted to Ballanche, Damiron summarizes the principal doctrines of the *Essais de Palingénésie sociale*. He concludes by comparing Ballanche to Maistre: Ballanche remains a member of the theological school, but one who tempers the outlook of the school by his openness to modern society, his tenderness, and his social optimism—he plays the dove to Maistre's eagle. Damiron regrets Ballanche's preference for poetic rather than philosophical exposition of his ideas, and complains that Ballanche's style disguises rather than expresses his philosophy. His fundamental error is one of taste: by converting into poetry ideas created by reflection and analysis, Ballanche has missed accomplishing a higher and more glorious destiny.⁶⁹ Though Damiron admires certain of Ballanche's ideas and recognizes the originality of his work, he is clearly reluctant to grant Ballanche the status of

⁶⁷ Jean-Philibert Damiron, *Essai sur l'Histoire de la philosophie en France au XIX^e siècle*, 2 vols. (Paris: 3^e éd. 1834), 1:286–296.

⁶⁸ Ballanche responds to Damiron, focussing on his ideas on language, in the addendum to *Institutions sociales* written for the *Oeuvres* (1830) reprint. See *OC*, 2:419–438.

⁶⁹ Damiron, *Essai sur l'Histoire de la philosophie en France au XIX^e siècle*, 2:307–315.

philosopher. It was, of course, precisely Ballanche's poetic, prophetic style that attracted many of his readers in the early 1830s.

The two-part article in *L'Echo de la Jeune France*, signed "Moultet", was introduced as the first in a projected series "Sur les Ecrivains Contemporains". The author, declaring that his goal is to make this important but difficult philosopher better known to Catholic youth, discusses the forerunners of Ballanche's philosophy of history—Augustine, Bossuet, Vico, Herder—and stresses his principle of the identity of the Fall and rehabilitation.⁷⁰ Further articles in which Ballanche's philosophy would be discussed in greater detail were promised, but the journal ran into difficulties soon after the appearance of the second part.

Ballanche was again placed before the readers of the *Revue des Deux mondes* in September 1834 when Sainte-Beuve chose him as the subject of one of his literary portraits.⁷¹ Sainte-Beuve had come to know Ballanche personally from various salons (although he avoided Récamier's salon as much as possible) and through his friendship with Jean-Jacques Ampère. In accord, as he later said, with his customary critical method and in order to be sure of having understood this eminent but very difficult author, Sainte-Beuve sought to efface himself and let Ballanche's ideas speak through his voice.⁷² The resulting portrayal was a detailed and sympathetic account of Ballanche's person and thought.

The article provoked a curious sequel, which Sainte-Beuve himself recounts in the post-script to its reprint in *Portraits contemporains*.⁷³ Sainte-Beuve was at the time a staff member of the *National*, a fervently republican Liberal journal. Some of his colleagues, reading his appreciation of Ballanche as praise for an Ultra who advocated a return to Restoration clericalism, hotly accused Sainte-Beuve of betraying his and their principles. In the midst of all this, François Coëssin, a theocratic

⁷⁰ Moultet, "Sur les Ecrivains contemporains: I Ballanche" in *L'Echo de la Jeune France* 2 (1835): 340–348; 373–378.

⁷¹ Charles-Augustin Sainte-Beuve, "M. Ballanche" in *Revue des Deux mondes* 3^e série, vol. 3 (15 September 1834): 686–713. Reprinted in Sainte-Beuve, *Portraits contemporains*, 2:1–51.

⁷² Sainte-Beuve's post-script to the reprint of the Ballanche article in *Portraits contemporains*, 2:46.

⁷³ Sainte-Beuve, *Portraits contemporains*, 2:46–49. See also Sainte-Beuve to J.-J. Ampère, 8 October 1834, in André-Marie Ampère and Jean-Jacques Ampère, *Correspondance et Souvenirs de 1805 à 1864*, recueillies par Madame H. C[hevreaux], 2 vols. (Paris: Hetzel, 1875), 2:63. The episode is also discussed in George, *Pierre-Simon Ballanche*, 131–133.

Illuminé whose *Neuf Livres* (1809) Sainte-Beuve had mentioned in passing, weighed with the charge that Sainte-Beuve's reference to him as a *sectaire* libelled his orthodoxy and demanded reparation.⁷⁴ The enraged Liberal republicans at the *National*, above all Jules Bastide and François Raspail, seized on Coëssin's charge as a further means of attacking Sainte-Beuve. Tempers flared and the critic was challenged to at least two duals. Sainte-Beuve prudently left Paris for a few weeks to allow passions to cool, although it was several months before the affair died out completely. While Ballanche did not allow himself to be shaken by these polemics, he was surprised and appalled by the furore faced by Sainte-Beuve.

Ballanche himself, earlier in 1834, had encouraged popular identification of him with the reactionaries by publishing and contributing a preface, at the request of the Marquis de la Gervaisais, to a volume of letters by Mlle. de Condé, a Bourbon princess.⁷⁵ The preface concludes, after Ballanche observes that a woman is better suited than him to describe the intimate nature of another woman's spirituality, with two pages of sentimental religious effusion by an unnamed woman—in fact, Ballanche's friend, the comtesse d'Hautefeuille. Ballanche's preface declares that he is publishing the letters both as a tribute and witness to the purity of the princess's life and as a counter-influence to the immorality disseminated by contemporary novels.⁷⁶ Ballanche's declaration was unquestionably sincere; nevertheless, there were many who not only mocked Ballanche's naive presentation of the princess but interpreted the volume as a political manifesto in favour of the ancien régime. Ballanche was so provoked by the misrepresentation that he took the uncharacteristic step of publishing a strongly worded pamphlet, "De la publication des lettres écrites en 1786 et 1787", in defence of his intentions.⁷⁷

The Sainte-Beuve affair was not the only bizarre episode to arise from the popularization of Ballanche's thought after 1830. Shortly before Sainte-Beuve's article appeared, the *Invariable de Fribourg*, infu-

⁷⁴ See the Editors' note in the "Chronique de la Quinzaine" for 30 September 1834 in *Revue des Deux mondes* 3^e série, vol. 4 (1 October 1834): 129–132. On Coëssin and his sect—for Coëssin was unquestionably a sectary in matters of authority, if not of doctrine—, see Auguste Viatte, *Les Sources occultes du romantisme*, 2 vols. (Paris: Champion, 1928), 2:32. Ballanche, as Sainte-Beuve noted, had visited Coëssin before 1817, but had been put off by Coëssin's authoritarianism.

⁷⁵ Louise-Adélaïde de Bourbon, dit Mlle. de Condé, *Lettres écrites en 1786 et 1787*, publiées par M. Ballanche (Préface par M. Ballanche) (Paris: Renouard, 1834).

⁷⁶ Mlle. de Condé, *Lettres écrites en 1786 et 1787*, ii–iii.

⁷⁷ See George, *Pierre-Simon Ballanche*, 167.

riated by a pamphlet that had baptized the contemporary period the "era of Ballanche", launched a violent attack against Ballanche that culminated in the attribution of a young woman's madness to her having read the *Vision d'Hébal*.⁷⁸ The *Invariable* was edited after 1830 by Arthur O'Mahoney, a legitimist who had belonged to the circle of *Le Mémorial catholique* until the glee with which the Mennaisians welcomed the July Revolution turned him against his former colleagues. From self-imposed exile in Switzerland he used the *Invariable* to launch bitter, calumnious attacks not only on Lamennais and the *l'Avenir* circles but on all those liberal Catholics whom he considered traitors to Church and State.⁷⁹

The Sainte-Beuve affair and the *Invariable* campaign—attacks from, respectively, the left and the right—demonstrate the ongoing ambiguity of Ballanche's position in French intellectual life. For those who had read his works, there could be no question of lumping Ballanche together with the Ultras or dogmatically conservative Catholics, and the enthusiasm shown for him by liberal journals such as *L'Echo de la Jeune France* and the *Revue du progrès social* demonstrates that some at least recognized his liberal aspects. But the liberalism of these journals was a Catholic liberalism that was thus well disposed to his theories. For other Liberals, and especially Liberal democrats or republicans like those of the *National*, the great enemy of their ideals was Rome; and since Ballanche proudly proclaimed himself a Catholic writer he must necessarily be anti-Liberal. The ongoing linkage of Ballanche with Maistre by writers like Damiron only reinforced this reaction. The issue is further muddled by Ballanche's own hatred of republicanism, which he never ceased to associate with the Terror. For those who believed that the only true Liberalism was republican, Ballanche's rejection of republicanism marked him as an enemy regardless of his Catholicism. For many Liberals, in any case, the identification of Ballanche with the enemy camp was clinched, as it had been fifteen years before, by Ballanche's friendship with that notorious reactionary, Chateaubriand. Thus, however unjustly, Ballanche was regarded by a significant segment of popular opinion as an ally of the forces of obscurantism and clericalism.

⁷⁸ Ballanche's account of this episode, in which he (sarcastically?) calls the journal in question the *Impartial de Fribourg*, may be found in a letter to Hautefeuille, 24 September 1834, in Marquiset, *Ballanche et Mme. d'Hautefeuille*, 32.

⁷⁹ Jean-René Derré, *Lamennais, ses amis et le mouvement des idées à l'époque romantique* (Paris: Klincksieck, 1962), 166 n. 188, 186 n. 74.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

THE *PARTI SOCIAL*

The July Days posed, in Victor Hugo's words, "la question de l'avenir".¹ For many, especially the young,² 1830 marked a great divide. With the new regime came the hope that a new world was in the process of being born; a world of true liberty and social harmony, a world of spiritual as well as social and political regeneration in which alienated souls searching for meaning and thirsting for the sacred would be assuaged. Among the surfeit of visionaries with programs for this new order—"Il n'y a pas d'année qui fait autant de théories sur l'homme que n'a fait cette année 1832 en un seul de ses jours"³—Ballanche stood out. His philosophy of history both explained the events of 1830 and marked a path to the desired future.

Ballanche was aware of his growing fame. In February 1832 his friend Ferdinand Denis observed in his journal:

I saw Ballanche a few days ago. His simplicity, his kindness is always the same, but he is beginning to become aware of his high reputation. When I observed how quickly it was increasing and in the last six months especially his name is on everyone's lips, [he said to me:] "As you told me six months ago, I feel that my name is beginning to spread with my ideas. For a long time I despaired of this".⁴

A few months later Ballanche proudly told Récamiér that "J'ai eu hier une assez longue visite d'un homme qui m'a dit entre autres choses: Monsieur, c'est de vos ouvrages que sortira la théologie de l'avenir".⁵ Ballanche attributed his new popularity to the correspondence of the

¹ Preface to *Feuilles d'Automne* (1831). Quoted in Brian Juden, *Traditions orphiques et tendances mystiques dans le romantisme français, 1800-1855* (Paris: Klincksieck, 1971), 335.

² For a demographic analysis of the "generation of 1830" and its significance for Romantic literature, see James Smith Allen, *Popular French Romanticism: Authors, Readers, and Books in the Nineteenth Century* (Syracuse: Syracuse UP, 1981), 76-88.

³ Alfred de Vigny, "Otello", quoted in H. A. C. Collingham, *The July Monarchy* (London: Longman, 1988), 45.

⁴ Entry for 4 February 1832 in Denis, *Journal*, éd. Pierre Moreau (Paris: Plon, 1932), 53.

⁵ Ballanche to Récamiér, 15 August 1832, in Agnès Kettler, *Lettres de Ballanche à Madame Récamiér, 1812-1845* (Paris: Champion, 1996), 573.

"religious juice" in his writings to the public's thirst for religion: "Tout cela est dû à la sève religieuse qui est dans mes écrits, et tout cela me montre la soif qu'on a d'une direction religieuse".⁶ Sainte-Beuve, in his *Revue des Deux mondes* portrait, playfully accounted for Ballanche's rising reputation in terms derived from Ballanche's own philosophy of history:

Il arriva alors à la pensée de M. Ballanche ce qu'il a dit de la pensée humaine en générale; son idée s'emancipa de cette forme de la Restauration où elle avait voulu trouver asile, et, devenue plus libre, elle plana dans des cercles indéfinis. C'est même à partir de 1830 que les doctrines de M. Ballanche ont fait le plus de chemin par le monde, et qu'elles ont remué le plus d'esprits religieux et penseurs dans la jeunesse.⁷

In fact, Ballanche's thought did soar in the first years of the July Monarchy, but in the quite specific circles of those who sought some form of progressive social renewal through religious regeneration. This chapter locates Ballanche at the centre of a movement, or, better, a force-field, whose dynamic, transmuting structure is comprised of liberal Catholics, polonophiles, neo-Catholics, Saint-Simonians and dissident Saint-Simonians, Fourierists and dissident Fourierists.

Liberal Catholics

Ballanche observed with great pleasure Lamennais' metamorphosis, beginning in the mid-1820s, into a liberal Catholic. No longer combatting the Revolutionary inheritance, the new Lamennais accepted its emancipating aspects as beneficial and worked for an alliance between Catholicism and the principle of liberty. From about 1827 he urged the Church to sever its ties with the absolutist monarchy, which he now considered obsolete and doomed, and to embrace the liberal order to which providence had granted the future. Lamennais did not abandon Catholicism for liberalism; rather, he concluded that it is only through liberal ideas of liberty, particularly liberty of religion, that the Church can detach itself from civil entanglements and focus on the renewal and propagation of faith that is the necessary

⁶ Ballanche to Récamier, 27 August 1832, in Kettler, *Lettres de Ballanche à Madame Récamier*, 582.

⁷ Sainte-Beuve, *Portraits contemporains*, 5 vols. (Paris: Lévy, 1869–1871), 2:32.

preparation for the rebirth of a truly Christian social order. At this point in his career, Lamennais believed that liberalism alone, without the stabilizing influence of the Church, would be dangerous.⁸

Lamennais' next step, in the months following the July Revolution, was to found the daily journal, *l'Avenir*. Its motto, *Dieu et liberté*, sums up its mission:

Dieu et la liberté! voilà les deux grandes conquêtes de l'homme tel que l'a fait le catholicisme, ses deux grands besoins; besoins inséparables car partout où notre Dieu est adoré la liberté règne, partout où la liberté règne, notre Dieu est adoré. Une chaîne merveilleuse les lie l'un à l'autre, comme la cause à l'effet.⁹

Though Lamennais was its leading figure, *l'Avenir*, during its meteoric existence from 16 October 1830 to 15 November 1831, was the collaborative effort of a group of young liberal Catholics. The Mennaisian movement had had its origins in the group of young clerics and laymen who gathered around Lamennais in the 1820s to study and discuss the faith. In 1824 Lamennais and two young priests, Salinis (1798–1861) and Philippe Gerbet (1798–1864), founded *Le Mémorial catholique*, a monthly journal that was the principal organ of the Mennaisians until *l'Avenir* in 1830. *L'Avenir* was largely written by Charles de Montalembert, who met Lamennais only in November 1830, and Henri Lacordaire. Other contributors included Edmond de Cazalès, Louis de Carné, Léon and Eugène Boré, Charles de Coux, Joseph d'Ortigue, and for a time Ferdinand d'Eckstein. The Mennaisians welcomed current social and political developments, including the July Revolution itself, as evidence of the continuing spiritual evolution of humanity. Lamennais' new conception of Catholicism transposes the teleological developmentalism of *Essai sur l'indifférence* into the social progressivism of *l'Avenir*: "Sous le catholicisme, qui est la loi à jamais féconde et inaltérable de la nature spirituelle, tout croît, tout se développe par un progrès sans terme".¹⁰ In article after article in *l'Avenir* and in works like Gerbet's *Introduction à la philosophie de l'histoire* (1831), Lamennais and his collaborators developed the themes of the necessary evolution of Christianity and the need to

⁸ Alec Vidler, *Prophecy and Papacy: A Study of Lamennais, the Church and the Revolution* (London: SCM Press, 1954), 136–138; Paul Bénichou, *Le Temps des Prophètes* (Paris: Gallimard, 1977), 140–141.

⁹ Lamennais in *l'Avenir* (2 January 1831), quoted in Jean-René Derré, *Lamennais, ses amis et le mouvement des idées à l'époque romantique* (Paris: Klincksieck, 1962), 432.

¹⁰ Lamennais in *l'Avenir* (29 June 1831), quoted in Derré, *Lamennais, ses amis*, 427.

safeguard order through an alliance between Catholics and Liberals.

The intellectual development of the poet Alphonse de Lamartine (1790–1869) parallels that of Lamennais. A more or less orthodox Catholic royalist from his *Méditations poétiques* (1820) to the mid-1820s, Lamartine was suggesting by the late 1820s that Christianity may be merely one imperfect reflection among others of the eternal truth. When he wrote *Politique rationnelle* (1831), which embraces the idea of an intellectual progress in religion in which the doctrines of the past are superseded as humanity develops its understanding of the truth, Lamartine considered himself a Christian along the lines of Mennaisian liberal Catholicism. Lamartine had been introduced to Juliette Récamier in 1822, but it was not until his return from a trip to the Near East, which he had undertaken partly in the hope that a visit to the Holy Land would resolve his religious uncertainties, in December 1833 that he regularly attended her salon and found in Ballanche someone who shared his interests. For the next several years they saw each other regularly.¹¹

Ballanche enthusiastically supported the program, so similar to his own, of *l'Avenir* during its brief existence. The points on which Ballanche and Lamennais now agreed were extensive: all religions are fundamentally identical; Christianity is the expression of universal tradition; Christianity is the voice of all humanity, and particularly of the masses; the essence of Christianity can be only gradually apprehended; its forms must evolve with humanity, progressively ridding itself of social and racial exclusiveness until all barriers of class and nation are broken down; in and through Christianity alone can liberty be realized for individuals and societies; purified Christianity is the truly universal religion of humanity.¹² A firm friendship sprang up between Ballanche and Lamennais on the basis of their intellectual alliance. Moreover, they decided to collaborate on a new journal that would focus on the role of the arts in the establishment of the new era of Christian society now dawning.¹³ Lamartine was brought on board and their journal was provisionally titled *La France littéraire*

¹¹ D. G. Charlton, "Religious and Political Thought" in D. G. Charlton, ed. *The French Romantics*, 2 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 1:51–54; Albert Joseph George, *Pierre-Simon Ballanche* (Syracuse: Syracuse UP, 1945), 135–136.

¹² A. J. L. Busst, "An Unpublished Letter from Ballanche to Lamennais" in *The Modern Language Review* 63 (1968): 361–369.

¹³ On Mennaisian aesthetics and its relation to the romanticism of the early 1830s, see Bénichou, *Temps des prophètes*, 180–186.

et poétique. Ballanche evidently decided that this title did not adequately express its religious-basis because in later drafts it became *La France religieuse et poétique*. A series of drafts of a “Discours préliminaire” intended to introduce the journal is to be found among Ballanche’s papers at the Bibliothèque Municipale de Lyon. Here, Ballanche presents the chaotic intellectual, moral, and spiritual state of France between 1789 and 1830 as an *époque palingénésique* marking the transition to the new era of religious and social unity based on the progressive conception of Christianity that he and Lamennais now hold in common.¹⁴ Ballanche’s uncharacteristic willingness to engage in contemporary debates, even at the rarefied levels contemplated in *La France religieuse et poétique*, is a sign of his sense that society needs leaders who understand the true state of affairs: “Une mouvement religieux s’opère dans le sein même et dans les entrailles de la société. Ce mouvement n’est encore que dans le fond des esprits, mais il paraître bientôt à la surface. Il faut à ce mouvement des directeurs et des organes”.¹⁵

In the years immediately following the July Revolution, several other journals besides *l’Avenir* sprang up directed at liberal Catholics. *Le Correspondant*, later a liberal Catholic journal, was founded in 1829 by a group of young royalists under the auspices of the “Association pour la défense de la religion catholique”. Its leading editors, Louis de Carné and Edmond de Cazalès, were both veterans of *Le Mémorial catholique*, and Carné had collaborated with Eckstein on *Le Catholique*. Though the “Association pour la défense de la religion catholique” had been founded at the instigation of Lamennais, many of the journal’s backers were more conservative and in general Carné and Cazèles tried to steer a middle path between Mennaisianism and Catholic conformism. Because of its moderation, *Le Correspondant* never had Lamennais’ full support. Its editors suspended *Le Correspondant* at the end of August 1831 in order to transform it into the monthly *Revue européenne*, which lasted, with the same editorial team, until October 1835. Though Carné and Cazèles’ new journal explicitly endorsed the liberal Catholicism of *l’Avenir* (a prospectus for the *Revue européenne* distributed with the 12 September 1831 issue of *l’Avenir* proclaims

¹⁴ BML, MSS 1806–1810, Dossier 19. Derré et al. have published a selection from these drafts under the title “La France religieuse et poétique” in *Dossier de La Ville des Expiations de Ballanche* (Paris: CNRS, 1981), 105–114.

¹⁵ Ballanche to Récamier, 4 October 1832, in Kettler, *Lettres de Ballanche à Madame Récamier*, 603.

the unity of the two publications, equally devoted to Catholicism and to liberty in all domains, in principles and aspirations),¹⁶ the *Revue européenne* tried to represent the full range of moderate Catholicism. In its pages one finds Mennaisians, Lamartine, Chateaubriand, the survivors of *La Muse française* literary circle, new voices in Catholic poetry, and advocates of contemporary German Catholicism. Lamennais continued to look disapprovingly this ongoing attempt to open up a middle path of moderate renewal.¹⁷ Ballanche published two articles in the *Revue européenne*; one on Chateaubriand (see Chapter Fourteen) and the other a review of Lamennais' *Paroles d'un croyant* (see Chapter Sixteen).

Poles and Polonophiles

The liberal Catholics around *l'Avenir* closely followed the November 1830 Polish insurrection against Russia, to which the Congress of Vienna had given most of Poland, and its aftermath. In France, where the Restored Bourbons had just been overthrown, public opinion was full of revolutionary fervour and passionately supported the Polish cause. French Catholics shared the general enthusiasm, casting the Catholic Poles as martyrs in a crusade against the spiritual and temporal oppression of the Orthodox Russians. The young July Monarchy shared the views of its populace but, recognizing that intervention was diplomatically and militarily impossible, offered the insurrectionaries no more than moral support. Bereft of foreign assistance, the Polish insurrection was brutally suppressed by September 1831. French opinion vilified Russia as the homeland of tyranny and the myth was forged, fanned by Polish émigrés in Paris, of Poland as the crucified Christ-nation whose sufferings both accuse and redeem the rest of Europe.¹⁸ At the centre of Polish émigré activity in Paris was the poet Adam Mickiewicz (1798–1855). Following an encounter with the Illuminism of Saint-Martin (via the painter Oleszkiewicz) in Saint-Petersburg, Mickiewicz had become convinced that he had been elected by God as the inspired prophet of the Polish

¹⁶ Derré, *Lamennais, ses amis*, 500 n. 143.

¹⁷ Bénichou, *Temps des prophètes*, 177–178.

¹⁸ On the contributions of Adam Mickiewicz, Juliusz Słowacki, August Cieszkowski, and Zygmunt Krasiński to the creation of Polish messianism, see Andrzej Walicki, *Philosophy and Romantic Nationalism: The Case of Poland* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1982), 237–307.

nation. His *Book of the Polish Pilgrims* (1832) preached a messianism of martyred Poland as the “Christ among nations”. Just as the Passion of Christ opened the path to the moral renovation of humanity, so the sufferings and sacrifices of the Poles assures the salvation not only of their homeland but of all Europe, whose material civilization has largely forgotten the spiritual values of sacrifice and faith incarnated by suffering Poland.¹⁹

During the nine months of the Polish insurrection, the Mennaisians did everything in their power to provoke French intervention on behalf of the Poles. They organized subscriptions and published stirring declarations in *l'Avenir*: “Libre et catholique Pologne, patrie de Sobieski et de Kosciusko, toi que fus au XVII^e siècle comme au XIX^e siècle l'héroïne du catholicisme défaillant, nous saluons ta nouvelle aurore, nous te convions à la sublime alliance de Dieu et de la liberté”.²⁰ In May 1833 Montalembert published a translation of Mickiewicz's *Livre des Pèlerins polonais* (though identified as the translator, Montalembert knew virtually no Polish; it was the work of an émigré). Montalembert's foreword praises the Poles as preservers of the ancient spirit of Christianity suppressed in the rest of Europe by godless philosophy and despotism and links the Polish cause and that of liberty in Europe:

Car ce qu'il y a surtout d'impérissable dans la cause polonaise, c'est qu'elle est la cause de toutes les nations, la cause du monde. Qui l'isolerait pour la renfermer dans les bornes étroites de la nationalité, la méconnaîtrait et la calomnierait.

C'est ce qu'elle a senti elle-même, lorsqu'en marchant au combat contre les ennemis déclarés de toute liberté, elle inscrivait sur ses bannières sacrées cette devise: *Liberté pour vous et pour nous!*²¹

Ballanche greatly admired the translation of *Livre des Pèlerins polonais*, and Montalembert recorded that he saw Ballanche frequently while it was in preparation.²² While his friends in the *l'Avenir* circle were

¹⁹ Zofia Mitosek, “Adam Mickiewicz vu par les Français” in *Romantisme* 72 (1991): 51, 53.

²⁰ Montalembert, “Révolution de Pologne” in *l'Avenir* (17 December 1830). Quoted in Louis Le Guillou, “Politique et religion: Lamennais et les révolutions de 1830” in *Romantisme et Politique, 1815–1851. Colloque de l'Ecole Normal Supérieure de Saint-Cloud, 1966* (Paris: Armand Colin, 1969), 213.

²¹ Quoted in Lucien Calvié, “Heinrich Heine et la Question Polonaise (1822–1851)” in *Romantismes et socialismes en Europe (1800–1848)*. Actes du Colloque de Lille, 1987 (Paris: Didier Erudition, s.d.), 43.

²² Montalembert to Lamennais, 20 February 1833, in Félicité de Lamennais, *Correspondance Générale*, éd. Louis Le Guillou, 9 vols. (Paris: Armand Colin, 1971–1981), 5:691–693.

most responsible for interesting Ballanche in the Polish cause, many other strands in his web of friendships and acquaintances drew him in that direction. From Récamier's salon Ballanche knew Prince Adam Czartoryski, former head of the insurrectionary national government in 1831 and leader of the Polish constitutional monarchists in exile, and Julien-Ursin Niemcewicz, poet and one of the founders of the Société Littéraire Polonaise, recently created at Paris. At the home of Lamennais and also in the circle of *La Revue Encyclopédique* Ballanche met César Plater, organizer of the revolt in Lithuania and an ardent admirer of Lamennais, and his brother Ladislas. At salons and dinner parties hosted by Marie d'Agoult and Franz Liszt Ballanche regularly encountered Mickiewicz and Frédéric Chopin. Finally, Ballanche's old friend from Lyon, Joseph-Marie Degérando, was a polonophile and prominent supporter of the Polish cause.²³ As early as July 1831 Ballanche and Bredin were discussing what they could do to assist the Poles.²⁴

From 1833 to 1836 Prince Czartoryski's circle, under the auspices of the Société Littéraire Polonais and with the assistance of French polonophiles such as Montalembert, published a journal in French, *Le Polonais: journal des intérêts de la Pologne*. Ballanche was deeply involved with this journal: he placed in it no fewer than ten articles; beginning with volume three his name appears among the collaborators listed on the frontis-piece; and his agitation seems to have been responsible for changing the journal's subtitle from "journal des intérêts de la Pologne" to "journal des intérêts de l'Europe". This change, which took effect on 1 July 1835, is itself a good example of Ballanche's law of solidarity, whereby events, especially suffering, of one country affect all countries. Ballanche's articles in *Le Polonais*, many of them quite brief, were not excerpts from unpublished works but reflections on the Polish insurrection and its aftermath. Ballanche's interest in this ostensibly political question is unexpected, but it is clear from his articles that he regarded it not as a political question but as a religious question, or rather, in certain crucial matters like the French Revolution or now contemporary events in Poland, politics is religion and must be discussed, as here, in terms of providence and

²³ Maria Straszewska, "Pierre-Simon Ballanche et le Cercle Polonais" in *Les Contacts Religieux Franco-Polonais du Moyen Âge à Nos Jours: Relations, influences, images d'un pays vu par l'autre* (Paris: Editions du Dialogue, 1985), 312.

²⁴ Bredin to Ballanche, 1 July 1831, in Claude-Julien Bredin, *Correspondance philosophique et littéraire avec Ballanche*, éd Auguste Viatte (Paris: Boccard, 1928), 285–286.

expiation. Ballanche's articles in *Le Polonais* generally fall into one of two overlapping categories: protests over Russia's treatment of Poland and calls for Europe to intervene; and sketches of the significance of the Polish situation for the unfolding of social evolution.

In "Un Mot sur les Confiscations exercées en Pologne" Ballanche asserts that Russia, as an Asiatic power, lags behind Europe; it has remained static while wanting to rule over progressive Europe. The Polish insurrection pits a nation representative of liberty and civilization against an empire representative of barbarism and servitude.²⁵ In "L'Avenir" Ballanche expands his focus from Poland to the great religio-political transformation under way in Europe as a whole. Ballanche again identifies Russia as the enemy of this transformation and warns that Poland's fate awaits other nations, particularly the Balkan peoples of the faltering Ottoman Empire and the Turks themselves, should they be so foolish as to allow themselves to become Russian dependencies. Ballanche introduces Greece as a sign of hope, of proof that a new age is dawning in Europe in which liberty will everywhere triumph over tyranny. The invocation of Greece is apposite inasmuch as Greece had occupied in French opinion of the mid-1820s the place that Poland held in the early 1830s. Ballanche assures his readers that Poland's eclipse is only temporary; like Greece it too will expel its oppressor in the name of liberty and redemption.²⁶ Here, as elsewhere, the rhetorical association of true religion and national liberty first worked out in opposition to Muslim Turkey during the Greek War of Independence is effortlessly turned against Orthodox Russia.

In other articles Ballanche integrates the notion of Poland as a "martyr-nation" into his philosophy of history. The fate of Poland is of interest to all progressive nations because the Poles' struggle for liberty is a necessary stage in the spiritual rehabilitation of Europe. The defeat of the Poles delays the advance of social evolution since the principle of progress has been temporarily eclipsed by the reactionary forces of the principle of stasis. Though providence will ensure that liberty triumphs in the end, in the meantime the lot of its champion is renewed suffering. Unlike eighteenth-century France, however, Poland is blameless; its current sufferings therefore expiate not

²⁵ Ballanche, "Un Mot sur les confiscations exercées en Pologne" in *Le Polonais* 1 (1833): 266.

²⁶ Ballanche, "L'Avenir" in *Le Polonais* 2 (1834): 211–241.

its own impiety but that of Europe in general. Poland's supererogatory expiation shortens the period of expiation for other nations.²⁷

As a result, no doubt, of his articles in *Le Polonais* and his acquaintance with her brothers, Ballanche was asked to write the preface to a biography of Emilie Plater, a young Polish woman who died a martyr's death at age twenty-five. Ballanche likens her to Jeanne d'Arc, and insists that her death is not in vain but rather part of an expiation that will culminate in freedom for Poland. The remaining three pages of the preface are taken from one of his articles in *Le Polonais*.²⁸

Neo-Catholicism

A group of young spiritualist writers associated with the journal *La France Littéraire* embraced Ballanche's historiosophy. Under the direction of Ernest Falconnet, L.-J.-B. de Turreil, August Bouzenot, Jean-Baptiste Leclère d'Aubigny, Adolphe Mazure, and Alfred Des Essarts, *La France Littéraire* advocated a religio-social transformation of society inspired largely by Ballanche's doctrines and interpreted the arts and other cultural fields of the day as manifesting a palingenetic period of end and renewal.²⁹ Ballanche reciprocated their interest. No fewer than six excerpts from *Ville des Expiations*, amounting to a significant portion of the eagerly anticipated third volume of *Palingénésie sociale*, appeared in *La France Littéraire* between February 1832 and June 1835 (see Bibliography). Adolphe Mazure's glowing article on Ballanche appeared in *La France Littéraire* in 1834. Mazure was in the early 1830s a professor of philosophy at Poitiers. His thought combined the eclecticism of his teacher, Victor Cousin, with a neo-Catholicism drawn from Lamartine, Saint-Martin, and, not least, Ballanche himself. His 1834 book, *Spiritualisme et Progrès social*, is deeply marked, as its title suggests, by Ballanche's social palingenesis. Mazure's article, in short, is the hommages of a disciple to a master. This piece, together with the series of excerpts from *Ville des Expiations*, made *La France Littéraire* one of Ballanche's strongest advocates.

²⁷ Ballanche, "Pologne et Russie" in *Le Polonais* 2 (1834): 108–109; Ballanche, "Providence et Destin" in *Le Polonais* 5 (1835): 1–2.

²⁸ Joseph Straszewicz, *Emilie Plater, sa vie et sa mort*, avec une Préface de M. Ballanche (Paris: Lachevardière, 1835), ix–xvi; see Ballanche, "Un mot sur la question d'Orient" in *Le Polonais* 3 (1834): 34–35, 37.

²⁹ Juden, *Traditions orphiques et tendances mystiques*, 370, 373–374.

In the 1820s a coterie of royalist Catholic romantic poets had formed around *La Muse française*. By the 1830s, although the greatest of them, Hugo and Vigny, had moved on, others, including Alexandre Soumet, Alexandre Guiraud, and Jules de Rességuier, continued their careers within this tradition. While these royalists had little sympathy for the liberal Catholicism of *l'Avenir*, they did draw near the more cautious social progressivism of Ballanche and Lamartine. In 1833 these orphans of *La Muse française* founded their own journal, *L'Echo de la Jeune France*, which bore the subtitle "Journal des progrès par le Christianisme", to which was added in the second volume (1834–1835) "Journal de Réforme Sociale". It would be difficult to find a better encapsulation of Ballanche's philosophy of history than "progress by Christianity". That Ballanche was the subject chosen to inaugurate the journal's series on contemporary writers suggests that the affinity was not mere coincidence. *L'Echo de la Jeune France* in effect mounted a campaign to make Ballanche better known to its Catholic readership. Ballanche, for his part, published the "Deuxième sécession plébéienne" of *Formule générale* in successive issues of *L'Echo de la Jeune France* in late 1833 and early 1834. The December number also included his seasonal piece, "Noël". *L'Echo de la Jeune France* endured until April 1837, though from 1835 at least it was edited by the conservative royalist, vicomte Joseph-Alexis Walsh, under whom the journal's subtitle became "revue catholique de la littérature, des sciences, et des arts". The journal had a short afterlife, still under the editorship of vicomte Walsh, as *L'Echo de France*, "revue monarchique et littéraire" (July to December 1837).³⁰

Another journal targeting the overlapping circles of aesthetics and religiously inspired social renewal, but closer to the Mennaisian spirit than *L'Echo de la Jeune France*, was *La France catholique*. This "Album religieux" (its subtitle), which appeared from November 1833 to 1836 under the editorship of a former member of *l'Avenir* team, J.-S. Jean, explicitly linked aesthetic and social issues: "Les croyances religieuses peuvent seules, en constituant l'unité des arts, les faire vivre de cette vie commune, sociale, sans laquelle toute vie individuelle languit et s'éteint".³¹ Ballanche and Eckstein collaborated with *La France catholique*, as did Catholic writers and poets of the younger generation, includ-

³⁰ Bénichou, *Temps des prophètes*, 206.

³¹ Prospectus-spécimen de *La France catholique* (1833). Quoted in Bénichou, *Temps des prophètes*, 187.

ing Maurice de Guérin.³² It was in *La France catholique* that Ballanche chose to publish "Le Dix-neuvième siècle", which concludes with his familiar palingenetic vision of the religio-social mission of the nineteenth century:

Les peuples ont trop long-temps oublié que le christianisme a été émancipateur: ils ne peuvent tarder de comprendre que pour assurer leurs émancipations successives, pour en recueillir tous les bienfaits, ils ne sauraient hésiter à en placer la haute garantie sous la protection du christianisme lui-même, de qui elles émanent dans l'origine.

Tout société, en Europe, périrait si le christianisme était, comme quelques personnes le prétendent, un fleuve tari. Hereusement les trésors de vie et de fécondité qu'il porte avec lui doivent suffire pour créer le monde nouveau de l'humanité.

Ainsi aucune régénération sociale n'est possible en dehors du christianisme, en dehors de sa philosophie, de sa morale, de ses dogmes. Rentrer dans le christianisme: telle est la mission actuelle du dix-neuvième siècle.³³

Alexandre Saint-Chéron attests to the high regard in which Ballanche was held by Neo-Catholics. Saint-Chéron's search for a religio-social doctrine after July took him from Saint-Simonism through Fourierism and liberal Catholicism to neo-Catholicism. Along the way he contributed to the Saint-Simonian *Globe* in 1830, Pierre Leroux's *Revue encyclopédique* in 1832, and Jules Lechevelier's *Revue de la progrès social* in 1834. Between 1833 and 1835 he collaborated on several neo-Catholic journals, such as *La France catholique* and *L'Université catholique*. Reflecting a decade later on his intellectual evolution in *La Politique de Satan au dix-neuvième siècle* (1844), Saint-Chéron dismissed Saint-Simonism and Fourierism as diabolical creeds disguised as Christianity.³⁴ His admiration for Ballanche, the "sublime voyant",³⁵ steadily increased as he moved toward neo-Catholicism.

Saint-Simonism and its dissidents

"Les socialistes, quels qu'ils fussent", recalled Jean-Jacques Ampère, "ne pouvaient négliger un penseur qui sur plusieurs points avait

³² Bénichou, *Temps des prophètes*, 176–177.

³³ Ballanche, "Le Dix-neuvième siècle" in *La France catholique* 2 (1834): 3.

³⁴ Bénichou, *Temps des prophètes*, 404; Frank Paul Bowman, *Christ des Barricades, 1789–1848* (Paris: Cerf, 1987), 328.

³⁵ Saint-Chéron, "De la poésie et des beaux-arts dans notre époque" in *L'Artiste* (1833), quoted in Bénichou, *Temps des prophètes*, 404.

devancé dans sa solitude les nouvelles directions de la pensée.”³⁶ Ampère’s socialists were the Saint-Simonians, and his recollection is correct. Between 1827 and 1829 Henri de Saint-Simon’s disciples transformed the movement from a rational, materialist school for social reform into a religion promising to heal the ills of heart and soul as well as of society. In the months before the July Revolution, Barthélémy-Prosper Enfantin and Saint-Amand Bazard emerged as the “Pères” of the Saint-Simonian church.³⁷ Enfantin exchanged several letters with Ballanche in which, while urging Ballanche to read Saint-Simon, he attests to the crucial role *Palingénésie sociale* played in the conversion of the Saint-Simonians from a materialist to a religious philosophy:

J’ai à m’excuser du long retard que j’ai mis à vous témoigner combien j’avais été sensible à votre obligeant souvenir, je voulais d’abord lire et relire Orphée et repasser encore une fois les prolégomènes, certain que je pourrais mieux exprimer l’impatience où nous sommes, mes amis et moi, de connaître la suite de votre bel ouvrage.

Le *Producteur* [the suspended Saint-Simonian journal] va incessamment paraître, et l’un de nos premiers soins sera de faire connaître l’impression que la *Palingénésie* a produite sur les élèves de Saint-Simon. . . . Je ne crains pas d’affirmer que les élèves de Saint-Simon sont à peu près les seules personnes qui, occupées d’idées sérieuses, comprendront l’idée régénératrice de la Palingénésie, et sympathiseront avec elle. . . .

Pour nous, Monsieur, pour nous qui croyons à une grande régénération sociale, à un avenir promis par Dieu même à l’humanité, à un nouveau développement de la chaîne non interrompue des traditions, l’auteur de la Palingénésie a pris une noble place parmi les hommes dont l’âme généreuse sympathise avec les destinées humaines.³⁸

Other Saint-Simonians, including Hippolyte Carnot, Eugène Rodriguès, Emile Barrault, Jean Reynaud, and Pierre Leroux read Ballanche carefully in the early 1830s. Ballanche was frequently mentioned—always positively—in the Saint-Simonians’ teaching sessions and in their journals, *Le Globe* and *L’Organisateur*.³⁹

³⁶ J.-J. Ampère, *Ballanche* (Paris: René, 1848), 228.

³⁷ On the evolution of “the children of Saint-Simon”, see Frank Manuel, *The Prophets of Paris* (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1962), 149–193.

³⁸ Enfantin to Ballanche, undated [1829] in Saint-Simon and Enfantin, *Oeuvres de Saint-Simon et d’Enfantin*, 47 vols. (Paris: 1865–1878; reprinted Aalen: Otto Zeller, 1963), 2:39–40. Sainte-Beuve confirms the influence of Ballanche on the Saint-Simonians in *Portraits contemporains*, 2:43.

³⁹ A. J. L. Busst, “Ballanche and Saint-Simonism” in *Australian Journal of French Studies* 9 (1972): 291–292.

In his definitive article on the relations between Ballanche and the Saint-Simonians, A. J. L. Busst has summarized the points of agreement between them: expectation of a new age of social and spiritual regeneration; universal reconciliation implied by the solidarity of classes, sexes, and societies; the idea of a universal man, of whom individuals are only fragments; progress through conflict; the mission of France; the importance of the East and the need for Oriental studies; interest in industrial and scientific, as well as spiritual, progress; abolition of capital punishment and war; amelioration of the status of women and the lower classes; and the spiritual mission of the artist.⁴⁰ The two systems diverge most strikingly over the status of Christianity. Whereas Ballanche interprets the present age as requiring, indeed witnessing, a transformation of the evolutionary Christianity in which all truths are contained, the Saint-Simonians argue that Christianity, merely one of a succession of religions in the history of humanity, is obsolete in modern industrial society owing to its condemnation of the material side of existence and must be replaced by a new religion, Saint-Simonism, just as Christianity itself once superseded paganism.⁴¹ Both the Saint-Simonians and Ballanche were aware of this fundamental difference between them. The Saint-Simonians, displaying the Enlightenment roots of their doctrine, declared Ballanche's reconciliation of progress with the Christian dogmas of the Fall and rehabilitation illogical and urged him to admit his confusion, drop the obsolete dogmas, and proclaim himself what he really is—a Saint-Simonian.⁴² Ballanche, for his part, though flattered by the interest of the Saint-Simonians, criticized them for wanting to change society too quickly and outside the context of Catholicism.

Ballanche's most detailed critiques of the Saint-Simonians were never published. In a manuscript draft entitled *De la prétendue religion saint-simonienne*, Ballanche, drawing on his fundamental principle that history is intelligible only in light of spiritual prehistory, argues that the Saint-Simonians, cut off from the traditions by their rejection of the dogmas of the Fall and rehabilitation, have separated humanity from what alone can explain it. Echoing his contrast in *Institutions sociales* between revolutions made by providence and revolutions made

⁴⁰ Busst, "Ballanche and Saint-Simonism", 296–298. See also David Owen Evans, *Social Romanticism in France, 1830–1848* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1951), 20, 42.

⁴¹ Busst, "Ballanche and Saint-Simonism", 298. See also Busst, "An Unpublished Letter from Ballanche to Lamennais", 363.

⁴² Busst, "Ballanche and Saint-Simonism", 298–300.

by men, Ballanche dismisses Saint-Simonianism as merely a religion created by men (he even dislikes designating such a doctrine as a “religion”). This draft evolved into the “Discours préliminaire” for *La France religieuse et poétique*, the journal he and Lamennais intended to publish. As Ballanche expanded the piece into a reflection on France since the Revolution, references to the Saint-Simonians were successively omitted until in the final version they are not mentioned at all. Similar criticisms of the Saint-Simonians appear in the unfinished section of *Ville des Expiations* devoted to the trials of notable contemporaries. A representative Saint-Simonian recants after being chastised by the tribunal of hierophants for having failed to understand Ballanche, and therefore having propagated erroneous views on the nature of humanity, society, and history.⁴³ Since neither of these critiques was published, Ballanche’s serious reservations regarding the Saint-Simonians were never made public. Busst suggests that the kind Ballanche, loath to upset friends who were Saint-Simonians or at least sympathizers, delayed in making his views public. Then, with the rapid decline of Saint-Simonianism following the schisms, one in late 1831 in which Bazard, Leroux, and others withdrew over Enfantin’s teachings on the rehabilitation of the flesh and the other after the 1832 trial of Enfantin and Michel Chevalier for offending against public morality, Ballanche could keep silent in all good conscience since the Saint-Simonian religion was no longer a threat.⁴⁴ Privately, Ballanche responded to Saint-Simonian attempts to co-opt him by advising them to wait for the publication of *Ville des Expiations* and then to take it as their blueprint.⁴⁵

Franz Liszt (1811–1886) first encountered Ballanche’s ideas through his Saint-Simonian friends. The young virtuoso attended Saint-Simonian teaching sessions during the early days of their religious mission, admired Enfantin, and became close friends with Pierre Leroux and Emile Barrault.⁴⁶ Hippolyte Carnot recalled that Liszt

⁴³ Both texts are in BML, MSS 1806–1810, Dossier 19. See Busst, “Ballanche and Saint-Simonism”, 301–304. The article Ballanche began as “La prétendue religion saint-simonienne” and then transformed into the “Discours préliminaire” for *La France religieuse et poétique* was finally published as “Le Dix-neuvième siècle” in *La France catholique* 2 (1834): 1–3.

⁴⁴ Busst, “Ballanche and Saint-Simonism”, 305–307.

⁴⁵ Ballanche, *Ville des Expiations*, avec une introduction et notes par Amand Rastoul (Paris: Edition des Presses Françaises, 1926), 41.

⁴⁶ Thérèse Marix-Spire, *Les Romantiques et la musique. Le Cas George Sand, 1804–1838* (Paris: Nouvelles Editions Latines, 1954), 431–432.

frequently attended their meetings and occasionally performed at the piano.⁴⁷ While Liszt never formally joined the movement, he was deeply attracted by the Saint-Simonian doctrines on social solidarity and the priestly function of the artist as mediator between God and the people.⁴⁸ The Saint-Simonians' admiration for Ballanche quickly rubbed off onto Liszt. It was Liszt's custom as a young man to call unannounced on writers whom he admired, and in accordance with this practice he introduced himself to Ballanche in early 1833.⁴⁹ Liszt apparently met Enfantin for the first time through Ballanche himself. When Heinrich Heine later accused him having indulged in Saint-Simonian excesses, Liszt defended himself by reminding Heine that he too had been involved with the Saint-Simonians in the early 1830s: "[T]he kindness accorded me by Ballanche permitted me, together with you, to meet with [Père Enfantin] and to echo humbly those words of admiration which, in your mouth, could have been flattery".⁵⁰

Shortly after meeting Ballanche, Liszt sent the first volume of his *Oeuvres* (1830) to his companion, Marie d'Agoult, with high praise.⁵¹ A few weeks later he coyly remarked to her that "je lui [Ballanche] *presque* demandé et il me *presque* proposé de me conduire chez Mme. Récamier de manière que nous finirons probablement par y aller un de ce soirs".⁵² Jacques Vier notes that Ballanche is one of the most frequently cited authorities in the Liszt-Agoult correspondence of this period.⁵³ Liszt loved to talk metaphysics, and Ballanche was delighted to discuss his ideas about history, myth, and symbol with the young pianist.⁵⁴ Liszt admired Ballanche's vision of a progressive Christianity, though his favourite passages were those in which Ballanche glorified the divine mission of the artist. The *Orphée*, which he read for the first time in 1834, affected him powerfully:

⁴⁷ Hippolyte Carnot, *Sur le Saint-Simonisme. Lecture faite à l'Académie des sciences morales et politiques* (Paris: 1887), 25–26.

⁴⁸ Ralph P. Locke, "Liszt's Saint-Simonian Adventure" in *Nineteenth-Century Music* 4 (1980–1981): 215.

⁴⁹ Eleanor Perényi, *Liszt: The Artist as Romantic Hero* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1974), 37.

⁵⁰ "Lettre à Heinrich Heine, 15 April 1838" in Franz Liszt, *An Artist's Journey: Lettres d'un bachelier ès musique*, trans. Charles Suttoni (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989), 104.

⁵¹ Liszt to Agoult, undated [1833], in Liszt, *Correspondance de Liszt et de la comtesse d'Agoult*, éd. Daniel Ollivier, 2 vols. (Paris: Grasset, 1933–1934), 1:20.

⁵² Liszt to Agoult, undated [1833], in Liszt, *Correspondance de Liszt et de la comtesse d'Agoult*, 1:32.

⁵³ Jacques Vier, *La Comtesse d'Agoult et son temps*, 6 vols. (Paris: Armand Colin, 1955–1963), 1:144.

⁵⁴ Marix-Spire, *Les Romantiques et la musique*, 434.

Ensuite je me mis à lire l'*Orphée* de Ballanche que j'achèverai ce soir. C'est un bien magnifique livre, et qui a été bien secourable à mon pauvre cœur si troublé, si oppressé, pendant ce voyage. . . . Le lendemain matin . . . je me mis à marcher et à relire *Orphée*. Dieu que des grandes et magnifiques choses: "Qu'importe que l'homme soit heureux pourvu qu'il soit grand? Le bandeau de l'inspiration est aussi un diadème. Le poète est l'expression vivante de Dieu, de la nature et de l'humanité. Lorsqu'il était auprès d'elle, c'était comme une joie douloureuse qui lui donnait une sorte d'effroi, tout semblable au malheur de l'absente. Hélas ce rayon trompeur était le bandeau de la victime et non le bandeau de l'épouse. Ah! j'en jure les merveilles de la création, j'en jure la grandeur et la bonté de Dieu, j'en jure la pensée humaine, j'en jure les douleurs et les affections de l'homme, l'âme est immortelle!!!" Je continuai à lire ainsi jusqu'à l'heure du dîner.⁵⁵

While there is as much of Liszt as of Ballanche in this passage (for Ballanche, suffering is the lot of humanity and the price of rehabilitation; for Liszt, suffering is the lot of genius and the price of great art), Ballanche's theory of the role of the artist in religio-social regeneration closely corresponds to Liszt's cult of music of that time, as recalled by Marie d'Agoult:

Remettre dans le temple de la musique sacrée que les goûts profanes du siècle en avaient bannie; rendre à Dieu le plus idéale des arts un culte épuré, émouvoir, entraîner les foules, les pénétrer d'adoration et d'amour divin: tel était l'espoir secret que nourrissait Franz Liszt.⁵⁶

Joseph d'Ortigue, one of Liszt's closest friends, had collaborated with the Mennaisians from the mid-1820s, contributing several articles to the *Mémorial catholique* and *l'Avenir* in which he worked out a theory of the arts based on Lamennais's theory of primitive society. In the early 1830s Ortigue accompanied Liszt in his exploration of Saint-Simonism and shared his friend's enthusiasm for Saint-Simonian ideas on social renewal and the role of the artist in the new society.⁵⁷ This combination of liberal Catholicism and Saint-Simonism immediately suggests Ballanche and, in fact, Ortigue regularly met Ballanche at Liszt's soirées and elsewhere in society. That Ortigue entitled his 1833

⁵⁵ Liszt to Agoult, 13 September 1834, in *Correspondance de Liszt et de la comtesse d'Agoult*, 1:114–115. The quotation marks enclose a compilation of passages (slightly misquoted) from *Orphée*: 5:99, 216, 220, 251; 6:91, 111.

⁵⁶ Marie d'Agoult, *Mémoires*, éd. Daniel Ollivier (Paris: 1927), 43–44. Quoted in Bénichou, *Temps des prophètes*, 418.

⁵⁷ Bénichou, *Temps des prophètes*, 192–193; Busst, "Ballanche and Saint-Simonism", 293.

work on the history of music "Palingénésie musicale" must be interpreted as a bow to Ballanche, although, in fact, the content of the work owes more to the Saint-Simonians than to Ballanche.⁵⁸

The various schisms that afflicted the Saint-Simonian family in no way reduced admiration for Ballanche among the dissidents, as the examples of Philippe Buchez, Pierre Leroux, and Jean Reynaud attest.

Buchez (1796–1865), having moved in 1825 or 1826 from the Carboneri to the materialistic Saint-Simonian school, participated in the spiritualist transformation of Saint-Simonism in the late 1820s. Believing, however, the significance of Saint-Simon's work to be its integration of the eighteenth-century philosophical tradition with the idea of Christian charity, he could accept neither the transformation of Saint-Simonism into a church, nor Enfantin's new doctrine of a reconciliation of spirit and flesh. He accused the group of having become promoters of a new pantheism rather than disciples of Saint-Simon. Along with a few like-minded followers, Buchez distanced himself from the Saint-Simonian family in the autumn of 1829 and broke publicly with them in January 1830. In the years that followed Buchez worked out a Christian socialism in which he tried to ally Catholic doctrine with the Jacobin heritage of the Revolution. Arguing that Saint-Simon's political and industrial plans could be fulfilled only if the Christian ideas of charity, equality, and fraternity were fully applied to social affairs, Buchez expounded his teaching as the authentic "Doctrine de Saint-Simon".⁵⁹ In constructing his version of social Catholicism, Buchez drew on Ballanche. In fact, his *Introduction à la science de l'histoire ou science du développement de l'humanité* (1833) is subtitled *Suite de Ballanche*.

Pierre Leroux (1797–1871) joined the Saint-Simonians in 1830 and was instrumental in the conversion of *Le Globe* into a Saint-Simonian journal. By the end of 1831, however, he had broken with Enfantin, and in the years that followed he devoted himself to spreading his own version of Saint-Simon's social ideas. Leroux built his dissident Saint-Simonism on the ideas of democracy and humanitarianism. Adding the emotional force of participation in a collective destiny to the deism of the eighteenth century and of Saint-Simon, Leroux

⁵⁸ Joseph d'Ortigue, "Palingénésie musicale" in *La France catholique* 1 (1833): 25–27, 33–37.

⁵⁹ Paul Bénichou, *Mages romantiques* (Paris: Gallimard, 1988), 134–135; D. G. Charlton, *Secular Religions in France, 1815–1870* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1963), 79; Evans, *Social Romanticism in France*, 85.

worked out a humanitarianism in which the individual is subordinated to Humanity. His veneration of the collective makes his social philosophy a humanitarian religion.⁶⁰ Leroux's social thought draws on Catholic Traditionalism, but purges the conservatism of its notion of tradition by substituting Humanity for Revelation. Whereas for Bonald and the early Lamennais revelation dominates history, for Leroux revelation is only a moment in the becoming of Humanity; the motive force of progress is "the successive and collective power of the human race". The *Revue encyclopédique*, hitherto a liberal journal, passed into the hands of the Saint-Simonians in September 1831. It was officially published by Carnot, then by Carnot and Leroux. When Leroux left the Saint-Simonians he took the journal with him, and from 1832 until 1835 the *Revue encyclopédique* was the voice of a group of Saint-Simonian dissidents who acknowledged him as their leader.⁶¹

Ballanche's progressivist version of Traditionalism was instrumental to the development of Leroux's thought and Leroux openly acknowledged his debt. An 1832 *Revue encyclopédique* article refers to the French Revolution as a "douloureuse initiation" and speaks of "M. Ballanche, annonçant en phrases poétiques, une époque palingénésique" as "la sibylle de ce tems".⁶² Alexandre Saint-Chéron, another former Saint-Simonian, effusively reviewed Ballanche's *Vision d'Hébal* in *La Revue encyclopédique* in 1832, proclaiming that "... nul n'a mieux senti le caractère palingénésique de notre époque, la nature de l'émancipation universelle qui se prépare. ... M. Ballanche est la personnification de l'époque de transition dans laquelle nous vivons".⁶³ The next year Saint-Chéron reviewed, equally favourably, Ballanche's *Oeuvres*.⁶⁴ Leroux saw Ballanche frequently in society, and in more private gatherings. Looking back during the Second Empire, Leroux recalled a dinner in the early 1830s at a Latin quarter restaurant with Ballanche, A.-M. Ampère, and a group of younger men during which he tried to coax Ballanche into telling them about his first visit to Récamier. Even after thirty years, Leroux was still roused to anger

⁶⁰ "Que signifie le mot 'humanitaire' dans l'acceptation romantique? Humanitaire signifie social et religieux *à la fois*." Léon Cellier, *Parcours initiatiques* (Neuchâtel: A la Baconnière; Grenoble: Presses Universitaires, 1977), 122.

⁶¹ Bénichou, *Temps des prophètes*, 331–337, 344–346.

⁶² Unsigned (Leroux), "De la tendance nouvelle des idées" in *Revue encyclopédique* 53 (January 1832): 2, 8. Quoted in Bénichou, *Temps des prophètes*, 335.

⁶³ Saint-Chéron, "La Vision d'Hébal" in *La Revue encyclopédique* 53 (1832): 600–601. Quoted in Busst, "Ballanche et Saint-Simonism", 294.

⁶⁴ Saint-Chéron, *Revue encyclopédique* 58 (1833): 656–657.

as he recalled how the loquacity of the younger men had prevented the "deux hommes de génie . . . deux lumières de notre temps" from speaking more.⁶⁵ (The younger men included Alexis de Tocqueville and Gustave de Beaumont, freshly returned from their trip to America to study penitentiary regimes. Did they, one wonders, discuss their conclusions with Ballanche, who had made such matters central to the *Ville des Expiations* and had recently published excerpts pertaining to penal reform in *La France Littéraire*?)

One of Leroux's collaborators on the *Encyclopédie nouvelle*, an effort at popular education launched in 1834, was Jean Reynaud. Yet another dissident Saint-Simonian, Reynaud developed strong Illuminist and neo-Catholic interests derived mainly from Ballanche. Fusing the belief in the indefinite progress of humanity common to the various social theories of the early 1830s with a theory of the transmigration of souls from planet to planet, Reynaud proclaimed a vision in which human beings undergo progressive purification and improvement through an endless series of existences on different planets in a universe, infinite both in extent and duration, in which God is ceaselessly creating. Though worked out in articles published in Leroux's *Encyclopédique nouvelle*, Reynaud's theories of the afterlife and metempsychosis exasperated the this-worldly Leroux and cooled their relations. Reynaud's best-known work, *Terre et Ciel* (1854), compiles his *Encyclopédie nouvelle* articles.⁶⁶

Another lapsed Saint-Simonian and disciple of Leroux, Adolphe Dumas, presented a highly heterodox social mysticism derived from Ballanche, Lamennais, and Leroux in his *La Cité des hommes* (1835). Though Dumas rejects original sin and his cyclical philosophy of history derives more from Vico and Joachim de Fiori, he greatly admired Ballanche for identifying Jesus as the apostle of palingenesis and, in fact, suggests that in the present cycle of ages Ballanche himself has become the new Christ: "Il montait au Calvaire, et pour croix de Messie/Il portait dans ses bras sa *Palingénésie*".⁶⁷

⁶⁵ Pierre Leroux, *La Grève de Samarez: poème philosophique*, 2 vols. (Paris: Klincksieck, 1979 [1863–1865]), 1:198–200. For a summary of Leroux's thought in relation to Ballanche, see Gaston Frainnet, *Essai sur la philosophie de Pierre-Simon Ballanche* (Paris: Picard, 1903), 257–260.

⁶⁶ Evans, *Social Romanticism*, 44; Charlton, *Secular Religions*, 79–80; Frainnet, *Essai sur la philosophie de Pierre-Simon Ballanche*, 260–264.

⁶⁷ Herbert J. Hunt, *The Epic in Nineteenth-Century France* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1941), 233; Bowman, *Le Christ des Barricades*, 258.

Alphonse Dory, finally, traces in his *Retour au christianisme de la part d'un Saint-Simonien* (1834) a well-travelled itinerary. Having been converted from youthful Voltaireanism by Lamennais' *Essai sur l'indifférence*, he was swept up in the Saint-Simonian vision of a new religion of progress. In 1832, his faith in Saint-Simonism shaken by the quarrels within the family and by the realization—provoked by the cholera epidemic—that Saint-Simonism offered only feeble consolations in the face of death, Dory began to read Lamartine and the Bible, and concluded that the fundamental reality of life is suffering and that only Christianity makes suffering meaningful. Above all, it was Balanche who enabled Dory to grasp the meaning of suffering and reconcile it with progress. His book concludes that the Saint-Simonians have correctly diagnosed the ills of the age but have failed to see that the remedy can only be found within a progressive Christianity.⁶⁸

Fourierism and its dissidents

The Fourierists, who like the Saint-Simonians offered a combination of scientism, social mysticism, and sensualism, profited from the schisms of the Saint-Simonians. Indeed, in Frank Manuel's words, "[t]he contest between the Fourierists and the Saint-Simonians for the alienated souls of Europe and America is one of the unwritten secret histories of the nineteenth century".⁶⁹ Though Fourier himself lived until 1837, the Fourierist movement of the 1830s and 1840s was largely the work of his disciples. Victor Considérant is best known to posterity, but in 1832 he was still at engineering school in Metz, and Just Muiron, Fourier's first disciple, was incapable of firing the youth of 1830. That Fourierism emerged as an important social movement in the early 1830s is above all owing to the efforts of two former Saint-Simonians, Jules Lechevalier and Abel Transon. The Fourierists, who about this time began calling themselves the *Ecole Sociétaire*, promoted their ideas in a series of journals that addressed both doctrinal and literary matters. Their first such journal, published from June 1832 to February 1834, was the weekly *La Réforme industrielle ou*

⁶⁸ Bowman, *Christ des Barricades*, 328.

⁶⁹ Manuel, *Prophets of Paris*, 2. In fact, this history has now begun to be written. See the chapter on the Saint-Simonians in Jonathan Beecher, *Charles Fourier: The Visionary and His World* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1986), 409–430.

le Phalanstère.⁷⁰ While Ballanche and Fourier, as we noted in Part One, had little influence on each other, the disciples of Fourier were very interested in Ballanche. Already familiar with the *Essais de Palingénésie sociale* from their Saint-Simonian days, Lechevalier, Transon, and others assimilated Ballanche's doctrine of progress through palingenesis into the Fourierian system of harmony.⁷¹ Philippe Hauger praised Ballanche as one of the giants of the era in his review of Ballanche's *Oeuvres* for *La Réforme industrielle*.⁷²

Lechevalier did not long remain a Fourierist. By the autumn of 1833 Lechevalier, Transon, and Considérant, finding Fourier impossible to work with, had begun to create a Fourierist movement based on the master's thought but independent of the man himself.⁷³ Transon and Considérant continued along this path, but within a few months Lechevalier decided that Fourierism was too narrow a basis for the realisation of his dreams of social transformation. In 1834 he broke away to establish a new movement advocating spiritual regeneration together with a progressivist version of Louis-Philippe's political and social program. He founded the *Revue de progrès social* (which lasted from January to December 1834) as the propaganda organ for his new movement.⁷⁴ Lechevalier printed encouraging letters from Victor Hugo, Lamartine, and Ballanche at the front of the February number of the first volume (1834) of the *Revue de progrès social*. Ballanche's letter, in whole, reads:

Vous ne devez pas douter de tout mon assentiment à votre noble projet de réunir dans une Revue tous les éléments d'une rénovation sociale, et je ne puis que vous inviter à persister dans les efforts que vous avez déjà faits, et auxquels je concourrai avec grand plaisir, quand les circonstances m'en fourniront l'occasion. A mon avis, il n'y a de bien durable et réel à opérer qu'en se plaçant dans une sphère complètement supérieure aux parties politiques et même au gouvernement. Il est temps et grand temps de mettre toutes les idées d'amélioration et de progrès sous la protection du sentiments religieux. En d'autres termes, et sans préjudice de la réorganisation industrielle et intellectuelle à laquelle vous travaillez, la loi du développement du Christianisme dans la société civile et politique me paraît être la seule loi possible de l'avenir.

⁷⁰ Beecher, *Charles Fourier: The Visionary and His World*, 422, 433.

⁷¹ See Juden, *Traditions orphiques et tendances mystiques*, 389.

⁷² Philippe Hauger, "Oeuvres de M. Ballanche" in *La Réforme industrielle, ou Le Phalanstère* 2 (1833): 105–106.

⁷³ Beecher, *Charles Fourier: The Visionary and His World*, 449, 472.

⁷⁴ Bénichou, *Mages romantiques*, 48 n. 4, 290; Bénichou, *Temps des prophètes*, 404.

Ballanche backed up his words by permitting the *Revue de progrès social* to publish a fragment from the *Ville des Expiations*.⁷⁵

The workers' circle

Gratifying as was his popularity among young intellectuals and artists, Ballanche always believed that he had much to teach the lower classes. Having always considered that his thought could speak directly to workers without the distorting mediations of a Buchez, a Leroux, etc., he was very excited when in late summer 1832 Charles Nodier told him that a small group of working men were studying his ideas. The workers met regularly at the house of a master artisan, an engraver named Feuchères (or Feugères), to study philosophy. After Nodier introduced Ballanche to Feuchères, the engraver invited them to attend the next meeting, which Ballanche described to Récamier:

Je vous ai parlé déjà d'une réunion d'ouvriers qui a lieu tous les samedis chez un maître ouvrier qui demeure dans le voisinage de Nodier. J'ai assisté hier soir avec mon introducteur à cette réunion. Il n'y avait que Nodier et moi qui ne fussions pas des ouvriers. Dans le nombre, il y avait quelques femmes, mais femmes d'ouvriers. J'ai été étonné de l'intelligence de tout ce monde-là. Cette réunion a commencé par être Saint-Simonienne puis elle a renoncé au Saint-Simonisme pour essayer des systèmes de Fourier. Maintenant voilà que j'y pénètre. Croiriez-vous qu'hier, au milieu d'une discussion provoquée par Nodier et où je me suis mêlé, j'ai été entraîné à l'exposition de mon système historique fondé sur le dogme chrétien de la déchéance et de la réhabilitation et que j'ai été parfaitement compris? Ce qui prouve à quel point j'ai été compris, c'est qu'ayant fait l'application de mon système à l'histoire romaine, ils ont dit que si l'application s'en faisait à l'histoire de France, on trouverait que nous sommes arrivés au cinquième siècle de Rome. Et, par la suite de la conversation, j'ai senti que leur esprit à tous était entré dans la sphère la plus générale puisqu'ils ont de suite cherché l'application à l'ensemble même des destinées humaines.⁷⁶

A few months later, Charles de Montalembert recounted a conversation with Ballanche that seems to bear on this shadowy episode:

⁷⁵ Ballanche, "Théorie de M. Ballanche: Fragment de la *Ville des Expiations*: séance d'initiation sur les traditions générales de l'humanité" in *Revue de progrès social* 1 (1834): 498–509.

⁷⁶ Ballanche to Récamier, 1 September 1832, in Kettler, *Lettres de Ballanche à Madame Récamier*, 590–591; see also Ballanche to Récamier, 27 August 1832, in Kettler, *Lettres de Ballanche à Madame Récamier*, 581–582.

M. Ballanche me racontait l'autre jour un trait curieux qui montre cette tendance régénératrice dont je vous parler dernièrement. M. Fourier qui, avec son phalanstère, aspire à se substituer au St-Simonisme, exposait il y a quelque temps son système devant une assemblée d'ouvriers; tout à coup, l'un d'eux se lève et lui dit: "Monsieur, je vois une objection invincible à votre système, c'est qu'il ne donne aucune garantie à la moralité". M. Fourier resta ébahi et chercha à prouver qu'il ne devait pas s'occuper de moralité, mais seulement de *sociabilité*, etc. Certes, en 1789, depuis le plus grand seigneur jusqu'au dernier ouvrier, personne n'aurait songé à objecter à un système de philosophie son immoralité!⁷⁷

Aside from their interest in morality, one can well imagine how Ballanche's interpretation of history as progressive emancipation, and of the plebeian as the hero of that history, might appeal to the Parisian workers. As for Ballanche, Georges Navet has glossed his remark about being astonished at the intelligence of the workers:

Lorsque, dans la pensée de Ballanche, le plébéen prend la parole ou commence à parler, quelque chose se met à bouger qui ébranle l'ordre établi et fait avancer l'histoire. La parole est le signe d'intelligence, et l'intelligence est une conquête qui amène le plébéen à ne plus se satisfaire du sort que d'autres lui réservent. En évoquant "l'intelligence de tout ce monde-là", Ballanche ne fait pas allusion à des aptitudes distribuées par la providence, et dont il faudrait s'étonner qu'elles aient été offerts à des gens d'un tel milieu; bien plutôt s'étonne-t-il que la conquête ait été si rapide, et que soit donc si imminente l'émancipation qu'elle annonce. En bref, à côté de la satisfaction qu'éprouve le théosophe à pouvoir exposer ses idées, il y a chez lui l'étonnement de voir l'avenir prêt déjà à éclore dans le présent.⁷⁸

Such positive evidence that the Paris plebeians had reached spiritual maturity was to Ballanche's mind an excellent sign for the state of French society as a whole. Perhaps his experience with the workers' circle contributed to the note of cautious optimism about the social order issuing from the July Revolution with which "La Tapisserie-fée" (published a few months later) concludes.

We hear no more about this workers' circle, nor is there any evidence that they remained loyal to Ballanche's ideas.⁷⁹ Jacques

⁷⁷ Montalembert to Lamennais, 20 February 1833, in Lamennais, *Correspondance Générale*, 5:693-694.

⁷⁸ Georges Navet, "De l'Aventin à la Croix-Rousse: Pierre-Simon Ballanche et le héros plébéen" in *Cahiers du Collège international de philosophie* 5 (1988): 30.

⁷⁹ According to Agnès Kettler, Feuchères remained a faithful disciple of Fourier. Kettler, *Lettres de Ballanche à Madame Récamier*, 584 n. 5.

Rancière, however, identifies the master-artisan Feuchères as the intermediary between Ballanche and the carpenter-social theorist, Louis-Gabriel Gauny, whose ideas on emancipation and redemption closely resemble Ballanche's.⁸⁰ In any case, the episode heralded no major "Ballanchean movement" among the working classes. Its chief importance was the encouragement it gave to Ballanche. One wonders, however, whether it influenced the decision of the publisher of the 1833 reprinting of Ballanche's 1830 *Oeuvres* to issue it in duodecimo instead of octavo, a decision that suggests not only that the 1830 edition had been well received but that the new publishers were targeting a more popular audience.

Foreign reception

Ballanche was little known beyond France and Poland. One exception is Edouard Gans, the Berlin jurisconsult and Hegel's student and editor. Gans wrote to Récamier in 1830 to thank her for sending him the four volumes of Ballanche's *Oeuvres*:

On trouve bien souvent dans notre temps des écrivains qui ont la conscience qu'un mouvement s'opère, que des progrès se préparent, qu'il ne faut pas rétrograder, mais marcher en avant. Quand on convient cependant de la vérité de ce qu'ils avancent, ils sont battus par leur victoire même: n'ayant ni profondeur, ni pensée capable de construire, ils s'effacent dans une nullité complète. Il y en a d'autres, qui nourris dans des sentiments substantiels de religion et d'histoire ne conçoivent pas que la marche dialectique du mouvement est elle-même essentiellement religieuse; ils ne voient Dieu que dans la fixité et dans l'immuable: ils le blasphèment tous les jours dans ce qui est nouveau, croyant l'adorer suffisamment dans le passé. Ces hommes perdent par leur esprit stationnaire ce qu'ils ont d'avantages sur leur adversaires par une profondeur qui manque à ces premiers. Il y en de très peu [sic] qui aiment les progrès de l'humanité par des raisons religieuses, dont la foi ne souffre en rien par les événemens, qui s'en trouvent fortifiés dans leur culte, confirmés dans leur religion, qui voient Dieu en avant de tout ce qui se fait, ne le séparant jamais de la liberté et du mouvement. M. Ballanche appartient à cette dernière classe peu nombreuse qui, par sa profondeur même, est beaucoup plus admirée que comprise. Quant à moi, j'adopte et avec une conviction intime les

⁸⁰ L.-G. Gauny, *Le Philosophe plébéien*. Textes réunis par Jacques Rancière (Paris: Maspero, 1983), 6–7.

idées de M. Ballanche qui se rapportent à la philosophie de l'histoire. . . . Oui, le christianisme est la religion essentiellement émancipatrice et plébéienne, de sorte que tous les progrès de l'humanité, toutes les libertés acquises pendant des siècles ne sont que le développement du christianisme.⁸¹

Gans had come to know Ballanche well during his extended visits to Paris. His praise was sincere, and his letter shows an accurate understanding of Ballanche's ideas, even if it assimilates him a little too closely to Hegel. Gans included a portrait of Ballanche in an article on the Récamier salon for the German journal *Der literarische Zodiacus* (translated in the *Revue de Paris* [1836]). Despite Gans' enthusiasm, Ballanche did not become well known in Germany. None of his works were translated into German,⁸² and, although various French critics commented on Ballanche's affinity with German philosophers, his works were suffused with a French chauvinism that would have made a popular embrace of Ballanche by Germany unlikely.

Ballanche was even less known in England than in Germany. The only trace of Ballanche I have been able to find in English literature is in Thomas Carlyle's *Sartor Resartus* (1833–1834), where Diogenes Teufelsdröckh, the Philosopher of Clothes, uses the word "palingenesis" several times for the phoenix-like death and rebirth of society. The final chapter of the book links the French word "*Palingénésie*" to both the Saint-Simonians and Edouard Gans. In July 1835 Ballanche casually observed to a friend that an English translation of one of his works was about to be published:

Voici un fait bien singulier. On imprime, en ce moment, une traduction anglaise d'*Orphée*, à Angers. Ce qu'il y a de plus singulier, c'est que le traducteur, qui ne serait pas en état de faire les frais de cette impression, a trouvé, dans Angers, un nombre suffisant de souscripteurs pour y pourvoir.⁸³

This is all that Ballanche says about an English translation of *Orphée*. There is no mention of such a work in the catalogues of the British Library or the Bibliothèque Nationale, though the following entry

⁸¹ Gans to Récamier, 21 December 1830, in Edouard Herriot, *Madame Récamier et ses amis*, 2 vols. (Paris: Plon-Nourrit, 1909), 2:273–274.

⁸² Although in 1832 Ballanche reported from Constance that a German there was working on a translation of *Vision d'Hébal*. Ballanche to Récamier, 5 September 1832, in Kettler, *Lettres de Ballanche à Madame Récamier*, 595.

⁸³ Ballanche to Hautefeuille, 2 July 1835, in Alfred Marquiset, *Ballanche et Mme. d'Hautefeuille. Lettres inédites* (Paris: Champion, 1912), 52.

appears in the manuscript catalogue of the Bibliothèque d'Angers: "*Le second livre de l'Orphée de Ballanche*, traduit en anglais par Hawke. Manuscrit autographe de traduction. En tête: 'Résumé de la religion saint-simonienne', et 'Liste des Angevins abondés au *Livre des actes*'". As far as I know, not one of Ballanche's works has ever been translated into any language.

The parti social

The persons and movements discussed in this chapter all advocate variations on a program of social transformation through religious regeneration: "Dieu et liberté" of the liberal Catholics of *l'Avenir* and the *Revue européenne*; "progrès par le Christianisme" of *L'Echo de la Jeune France*; the national messianism of Mickiewicz; the spiritualism and social progress of Mazure and *La France Littéraire*; and the various progressivist syntheses of social reform and spirituality of the Saint-Simonians, Fourierists, and their respective dissidents. They are linked not just by intellectual affinity but by a web of alliances, collaborations, and friendships. Together, they form a force-field, whose dynamic, transmuting structure is indicated by the shifting relations within and among the groups as well as by the trajectories of a Lechevalier or a Saint-Chéron. This force-field received the name of the *parti social*, though it was always more an idea than an actual organization. The name seems to have been coined by Lamennais shortly before the July Revolution: "Rendez le libéralisme chrétien, ce sera le parti social".⁸⁴

In a speech to the Chamber of Deputies of 13 March 1834 summing up his reflections on the early 1830s, Lamartine called for the creation of a "*parti-social*" that would overcome the impotence of existing political parties by transcending narrow class interest and speaking for society as a whole. Though Lamartine argued that this new party, based on "the universality of rights and interests", would serve as the true foundation for the social order issuing from the Revolution, in general Lamartine spoke of his future party more as an idea destined to triumph than as an actual political organization.⁸⁵

⁸⁴ Lamennais to Benoît d'Azy, 11 May 1830, in Derré, *Lamennais, ses amis*, 407 n. 66.

⁸⁵ Bénichou, *Mages romantiques*, 47–48, 55.

In these same years Jules Lechevelier was using the name “*parti social*” for the social progressivism on behalf of which he founded *Revue de progrès social* at the beginning of 1834.⁸⁶ Ballanche, Hugo, and Lamartine, we recall, associated themselves with the *Revue de progrès social*, and Ballanche and Lamennais’ *La France religieuse et poétique*, whose collaborators were to include, according to a draft of the “Discours préliminaire”, Montalembert, Lamartine, and Sainte-Beuve.⁸⁷ These people, and all others for whom the answer to Hugo’s question of the future is social transformation through religious regeneration, constitute the *parti social*.

The historical space in which the *parti social* was conceivable was created by the optimism for social reform of the early July Monarchy and the opening to liberalism by a segment of the French Church. It was constrained on one side by conservative Catholics who wanted no part of either progressive politics or liberal Catholicism, and on the other by republicans and other political theorists and activists who preferred their social reform straight up, undiluted by what they considered mystificatory survivals of the old religio-social order. Ballanche’s historiosophy flourished in this space. That under the Restoration he had anticipated the religio-social regeneration sought by so many in the early years of the July Monarchy gave him the status of prophet and guide. Ballanche must be recognized as a force equal to any other in the force-field of the *parti social*. These years were Ballanche’s moment in the sun.

⁸⁶ See the anonymous article (probably by Lechevalier) entitled “Du parti social” in *Revue de progrès social* 1 (June 1834): 557ff. Bénichou, *Mages romantiques*, 48 n. 4.

⁸⁷ BML, MSS 1806–1810, Dossier 19.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

1834 AND AFTER

Ballanche's moment in the sun was short-lived. 1834 was a critical year because the optimism for a religio-social transformation of French society that had made possible the *parti social* vanished. As the Church hardened its position against liberal Catholics and the July Monarchy turned to the right, the reconfiguration of forces pulled apart the *parti social*. The first section of this chapter discusses the collapse of the *parti social* and its consequences for the reception of Ballanche's philosophy of history by focussing on two epochal events of 1834: the publication of Lamennais' *Paroles d'un croyant* and the Lyon riots. The second section summarizes Ballanche's ongoing influence among the now-fragmented constituents of the *parti social*.

Crises of 1834

L'Avenir suspended publication in November 1831 in the face of intense opposition from the ecclesiastical establishment. Lamennais, accompanied by Lacordaire and Montalembert, went to Rome seeking support from Pope Gregory XVI. To the astonishment of Lamennais, though of virtually no one else, Gregory XVI responded by condemning, in the August 1832 encyclical *Mirari vos*, the basic positions of *L'Avenir*, including the ideas that the Church needs to be reformed and that there can be any rapprochement between Catholicism and the society issuing from the Revolution. Further, having already ordered in a Pontifical Letter of 29 June 1832 Polish bishops to recognize and obey Tsar Nicholas as the established temporal authority, Gregory XVI condemned Montalembert's edition of *Livre des pèlerins polonais* in December 1833. The condemnation threw Montalembert into consternation; he withdrew his edition from circulation, and decided to separate himself definitively from the political enterprises in which Lamennais was engaged and devote himself instead to historical studies.¹

¹ Jean-René Derré, *Lamennais, ses amis et le mouvement des idées à l'époque romantique*

Ballanche concluded from *Mirari vos* that official Catholicism was distancing itself more and more from liberty. While lamenting Gregory XVI's reactionism, he expected Lamennais to submit in the name of Catholic unity and to withdraw completely from active politics, restricting himself to his philosophical studies, in order to maintain Catholic unity. Meanwhile, the task of dragging the Church into the modern era requires an agent of reconciliation who is independent of ecclesiastical control and therefore protected from the reactionary short-sightedness that has crippled Lamennais. Surveying the contemporary scene for possible candidates, Ballanche could see only one contender: himself. *Palingénésie sociale* is alone both truly religious and unswervingly devoted to liberty so as to be able to prepare the way for a reconstitution of a Catholic unity that embraces the liberty essential to modern society.² Ballanche continued his close relations with Lamennais in this difficult time. Indeed, in the summer of 1833 Lamennais and his circle were still eagerly discussing Ballanche's inaugural article and the imminent appearance of *La France religieuse et poétique*, which some of them called the *Recueil philosophique, littéraire et artistique*.³ Franz Liszt observed to Marie d'Agoult about this time: "Ballanche que j'ai rencontré l'autre soir est fort occupé de la publication de sa *France Religieuse et poétique* (qui paraître sous sa direction de quinze en quinze jours, je pense)".⁴

Montalembert, Lacordaire, and virtually all of Lamennais' supporters submitted to Rome, urging Lamennais to do the same. Montalembert took exactly the same position as Ballanche vis-à-vis Lamennais' activism, and, moreover, he was aware of Ballanche's opinions.⁵ Lamennais himself agonized over his response for several months. He appeared to be taking the path of submission, repeatedly telling his friends over the first few months of 1833 that he would be occupied for at least two years revising and rewriting his philosophy and had

(Paris: Klincksieck, 1962), 652; Louis Le Guillou, "Politique et religion: Lamennais et les révolutions de 1830" in *Romantisme et Politique, 1815-1851* (Paris: Armand Colin, 1969), 214-215.

² Ballanche to Récamier, 15 September and 13 October 1832, in Agnès Kettler, *Lettres de Ballanche à Madame Récamier, 1812-1845* (Paris: Champion, 1996), 598, 605-606.

³ Abbé Gerbet to Lamennais, 17 July 1833, in Félicité de Lamennais, *Correspondance Générale*, éd. Louis Le Guillou, 9 vols. (Paris: Armand Colin, 1971-1981), 5:768.

⁴ Liszt to Agoult, undated [1833], in Franz Liszt, *Correspondance de Liszt et de la comtesse d'Agoult*, 2 vols., éd. Daniel Ollivier (Paris: Grasset, 1933-1934), 1:31.

⁵ See Montalembert to Lamennais, 6 February 1833, in Lamennais, *Correspondance Générale*, 5:684.

no intention of returning to Paris or reentering public affairs until this work was completed.⁶ He was indeed writing, but the resulting book, *Paroles d'un croyant* (written in May and June 1833 but not published until April 1834), broke openly and irrevocably with Rome. From the early 1830s, under the influence of his *l'Avenir* collaborator Charles de Caux, Lamennais had taken up the cause of the working class. In the *Avenir* period Lamennais' Catholicism mitigated his populism; now, having despaired of the Church, Lamennais launched a fervent, emotional protest against the oppression of the poor. *Paroles*, the best selling book of the July Monarchy,⁷ bitterly attacked the Kings of Europe and the Pope for failing to live up to their Christian duties to the people. Although *Paroles* stopped short of advocating revolution outright, its scathing condemnation of the political and religious establishments left little doubt about Lamennais' view of the legitimacy of those in authority. Lamennais' social gospel, while still based on Christ, repudiated the Church as irredeemably corrupt.

Gregory XVI condemned *Paroles d'un croyant* in the June 1834 encyclical *Singulari nos* on the grounds that the book, "slight in its volume but immense in its perversity", undermines the foundations of spiritual and temporal authority. The encyclical completed the destruction of the *Avenir* group and of the Mennaisian school. Faced with the choice between abandoning Lamennais or cutting themselves off from the Church, one after another Lacordaire, Gerbet, Salinis, de Caux, and finally Montalembert submitted to Rome. Lamennais, however, concluded from *Singulari nos* that liberalism and Catholicism were incapable of reconciliation. He remained convinced that social regeneration is possible only through religion, but that it requires a progressive religion that does not yet exist. Lamennais was now isolated, though when he finally ceased to regard himself as a member of the Church cannot be said with certainty and he was never formally excommunicated.⁸

In the same years of the early 1830s that Rome was curbing liberal Catholicism, the July Monarchy turned to the right. From the first weeks of its existence, the liberal founders of the July Monarchy were

⁶ Alec Vidler, *Prophecy and Papacy* (London: SCM Press, 1954), 221.

⁷ James Smith Allen, *In the Public Eye: A History of Reading in Modern France, 1800–1940* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1991), 48.

⁸ Bernard M. G. Reardon, *Religion in the Age of Romanticism* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1985), 195–196, 201.

divided into radicals, who considered the July Revolution a complete repudiation of the social order of the Restoration, and conservatives, who viewed the Revolution as little more than a change in dynasty. The radical liberals came to be known as the *parti de mouvement* and the conservative liberals as the *parti de résistance*. For the first year the *parti de mouvement*, led by the banker Jacques Laffitte, was dominant, but by March 1831 government was in the hands of Casimir Périer and the *parti de résistance*. Economic and political unrest in 1832 strengthened the *parti de résistance's* hold on power as the bourgeoisie on which the July Monarchy was based began to abandon its liberal principles and optimism for social regeneration of 1830 in favour of repressive policies directed against the lower, "dangerous" classes. Périer's death from cholera in the 1832 epidemic occasioned no change in policy; the *parti de résistance*, now led by Victor de Broglie, Adolphe Thiers, and François Guizot, devoted itself to the maintenance of order and protection of the interests of the bourgeoisie against the demands of the working classes.⁹

The tendency toward repression was sharply reinforced by the six days of rioting that shook Lyon, and indeed the July Monarchy itself, in April 1834. The riots, kindled by the economic grievances of the silk-weavers, or *canuts*, and fired by their resentment at a recently promulgated law forbidding labour associations, which the *canuts* interpreted as an attempt to destroy their ability to protect themselves against exploitation by the owners of the silk houses, spilled over into open rebellion. The authorities, led by Thiers as Minister of the Interior, reacted with a massive show of military strength, crushing the revolt after four days of fighting at a cost of over 320 dead.¹⁰ At the trial of those whom the authorities had identified as the leaders of the uprising, the government, determined to deny that the riots had arisen from purely economic grievances, presented them, despite a dearth of evidence, as an insurrection organized by its republican enemies. The republicans themselves, weak and disorganized at Lyon, took over the trial (held in Paris) as a forum for their views, thereby

⁹ H. A. C. Collingham, *The July Monarchy* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1988), 24; André Jardin and André-Jean Tudesq, *Restoration and Reaction, 1815-1848* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1988), 107-110.

¹⁰ See Robert J. Bezucha, *The Lyon Uprising of 1834: Social and Political Conflict in the Early July Monarchy* (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1974). On the organization of the *canuts*, see Fernand Rude, "Lyon en 1830-1834: Aux origins du syndicalisme et du socialisme" in *Romantisme* 10 (1980): 213-238.

confirming the government's contention that they had inspired and lead the rioting.¹¹

Lamennais' break with Rome surprised and saddened Ballanche; and *Paroles d'un croyant*, of which Lamennais sent him an inscribed copy, disturbed him deeply.¹² Deciding that *Paroles* was a serious matter, Ballanche reviewed it immediately in the *Revue européenne*.¹³ Avoiding both the excesses of horror and enthusiasm that characterized most reviews of *Paroles*, Ballanche offers a measured response. He begins by praising his friend's book as a cry of distress on behalf of religious liberty; a cry that, moreover, expresses the first awareness of a crisis wherein reactionary forces threaten all liberties: "Il a vu, dans le christianisme, la seule loi réalisable de liberté et d'émancipation des hommes et des peuples".¹⁴ Ballanche urges the authorities not to be so enraged by the exaggerated rhetoric of the author's *cri de coeur* that they dismiss the reality of the crisis to which it points. Ballanche then moves on to his serious criticisms of the book. Above all, its advocacy of social emancipation is premature: extending liberties to the lower classes before they are sufficiently mature can only result in disaster. Ballanche, we recall, attributed the Jacobin Terror to just such an ill-considered emancipation. Lamennais' rhetoric inflames a delicate situation (an allusion to the Lyon riots), and while liberty must indeed come to the people, it must come peacefully and without anticipating the unfolding of social evolution. Lamennais is guilty of impatience, of advocating an active conquest of liberties before the appropriate time. When, in the judgement of providence, the lower classes have matured sufficiently, the desired liberties will be extended to them, and not by means of revolution but peacefully, by means of the extension of the Christian principle of charity into the civil sphere, and within the established structure of society. (Cf. Ballanche's distinction in *Institutions sociales* between revolutions made by time and revolutions made by human beings). Nothing, in Ballanche's view, can justify incitement to revolt: "Je dirai aux multi-

¹¹ On the trial, see Bezucha, *Lyon Uprising*, 175–192.

¹² It is most intriguing, therefore, that, according to an entry in the National Union Catalogue (vol. 313, p. 197), an early Spanish translation of *Paroles*—*Las palabras de un creyente en 1833* (Burdeos: Teycheney, 1834)—contains a preface signed "Ballanche".

¹³ Ballanche, "Paroles d'un croyant" in *Revue européenne* 8 (May 1834): 344–353. Reprinted in Derré, et al., *Dossier de La Ville des Expiations de Ballanche* (Paris: CNRS, 1981), 83–86.

¹⁴ Ballanche, "Paroles d'un croyant", 84.

tudes: 'Ne croyez pas que la révolte soit chose licite'.¹⁵ Ballanche concludes with an apostrophe to Lamennais himself: "Vous avez effrayé les pouvoirs, lorsqu'il fallait les instruire; vous avez soulevé les passions de la multitude, lorsqu'il fallait les apaiser".¹⁶ *Paroles d'un croyant*, Ballanche concludes, brilliantly expresses the crisis of contemporary society, but only points to the need for reform rather than providing a blueprint for reform.

Elsewhere, Ballanche remarked that Lamennais' book is "le symptôme d'un malaise incurable, malaise dont le livre de notre cher abbé est un déchirante et chrétienne expression. Ainsi, je ne le considère point comme un prophète de l'avenir, mais comme le prophète du présent".¹⁷ Ballanche, we know, often spoke of Joseph de Maistre as "the prophet of the past", meaning that he advocated a form of Christianity more suited an earlier phase of the unfolding of social evolution than to post-Revolutionary society.¹⁸ Designating Lamennais "the prophet of the present" indicates that Lamennais bears witness to the confusion of the contemporary period of transition from an expiring social to the new one being born. Ballanche reserves for himself, who alone properly understands the providential unfolding of history, the title of "the prophet of the future". Ballanche's chief criticism, however, is that in abandoning the Church Lamennais has cut himself off from the only power capable of creating a new society in which complete social emancipation can be realized.

Gregory XVI issued *Singulari nos* a few weeks after Ballanche's review. Upon learning of the papal condemnation of *Paroles*, Ballanche wrote to his friend, offering his sympathy and assuring him that since providence has decreed the evolution of Christianity he should not be unduly troubled by the imprecations voiced against him by ecclesiastical authorities who persist in clinging to the dead letter of its outmoded form. He did not, however, retract his own criticisms of the work.¹⁹ In the same letter Ballanche informs Lamennais of his impending trial in *Ville des Expiations*.²⁰ Far from being upset over the

¹⁵ Ballanche, "*Paroles d'un croyant*", 85.

¹⁶ Ballanche, "*Paroles d'un croyant*", 86.

¹⁷ Ballanche to Hautefeuille, 18 May 1834, in Alfred Marquiset, *Ballanche et Mme. d'Hautefeuille. Lettres inédites* (Paris: Champion, 1912), 26.

¹⁸ See, for example, *OC*, 4:289.

¹⁹ Ballanche to Lamennais, 1-5 September 1834, in Lamennais, *Correspondance Générale*, 6:753.

²⁰ See also Ballanche to Hautefeuille, 24 September 1834, in Marquiset, *Ballanche et Mme. d'Hautefeuille*, 32.

prospect of his trial, Lamennais replied: "Je vous supplie de ne pas trop retarder la publication de votre nouvel ouvrage. Les âmes ont besoin d'entendre des voix telles que la vôtre pour reprendre courage et se calmer un peu au milieu de leurs anxiétés".²¹ This same letter clearly defines Lamennais' position vis-à-vis the Church on the morrow of *Singulari nos*:

Je suis catholique et je veux l'être, sans que cela m'oblige à adopter la politique suivie par les hommes de la hiérarchie ni en général leurs opinions en ce qui ne touche pas la foi. Quant à la question de l'avenir, elle me paraît extrêmement obscure; je vois évidemment que de grandes réformes sont nécessaires, mais je ne vois pas à beaucoup près aussi clairement où elles s'arrêteront, ni ce qui succèdera à ce qui est aujourd'hui et ne saurait continuer d'être. Plusieurs fois j'ai cherché à fixer le point où la partie morte de la plante touchait à la partie vive; *l'Avenir* n'était qu'un essai de ce genre; il a échoué: Dieu qui sait ce que nous ne savons point, creuse toujours pour couper plus bas. L'ébranlement des esprits, leurs incertitudes, leurs angoisses, passent tout ce qu'on peut imaginer. Un homme d'un rare mérite [Charles de Caux] m'écrivait dernièrement: je comprends que pour être catholique comme le Pape veut qu'on le soit, il faut que je renonce, non seulement à ma qualité de citoyen, mais encore à ma qualité d'homme, cela est dur, mais enfin je préfère la paix de ma conscience à tout. Quand on en est là, il est visible qu'il se prépare quelque chose de profond dans le monde, car il est impossible qu'on ait à opter entre être homme et être chrétien. Et qu'est que le christianisme, sinon la religion du fils du Dieu *fait homme*? L'humanité ne saurait rester dans l'état où elle est maintenant. La nuit s'achève, attendons le jour, il paraître bientôt.

Ballanche's continuing friendship for Lamennais at this difficult time marks both the admiration each had for the other as a human being independent of intellectual considerations, as well as Ballanche's utter disregard for ecclesiastical authority (as opposed to the unity of the Church, which, he assumed would outlast the temporary obtuseness of its leaders). Nevertheless, he could not endorse Lamennais' path. A fragment of the manuscript drafts of unpublished trial scenes of *Ville des Expiations* makes Lamennais declare that the future of the human race is based on Catholic unity as well as political liberty: "Un prêtre se présente: c'est l'abbé de La Mennais. Il a renoncé à ses tristes prévisions de la fin du monde, et il croit à l'avenir du genre humain fondé sur l'unité catholique et la liberté politique".²²

²¹ Lamennais to Ballanche, 6 October 1834, in Lamennais, *Correspondance Générale*, 6:305.

²² BML, MSS 1806–1810, Dossier 19. See A. J. L. Busst, "An Unpublished Letter

The Lyon riots, to which Ballanche alluded in his *Revue européenne* review of *Paroles d'un croyant*, were very much on his mind. Besides worrying about his sister and friends in Lyon, he considered the riots to be catastrophic from the point of view of his philosophy of history. Social reform, which is nothing other than the translation of Christian charity into the social and political realms, must occur gradually and through co-operation between classes. Ballanche read the Lyon riots, which threatened to overturn the entire social order and set the lower classes and the bourgeoisie at each other's throats, as a terrible sign that France was preparing to throw itself into another period of chaos like that of the post-1789 years.²³ Ballanche here returns to his initial reaction to the July Revolution itself: social and political change should come about by means of evolution not revolution.

That *Paroles d'un croyant* appeared just as the Lyon riots erupted was, to Ballanche's mind, no coincidence: the two events were simply different aspects, one abstract, the other concrete, of the same social crisis.²⁴ Ballanche's intuition was confirmed by subsequent events. A group of insurgents awaiting trial in a Lyon prison passed the time by reading together *Paroles d'un croyant*, whose religious message they found deeply moving.²⁵ And Lamennais was chosen as one of the twelve defenders of the Lyon accused at their trial. All twelve were rejected by the authorities, who feared that they would stir up public opinion. Lamennais wrote an account of the affair, but did not publish it.²⁶

Ballanche held two groups responsible for the Lyon riots: the bourgeoisie and the Saint-Simonians. Ballanche condemns the economic selfishness of the bourgeoisie that pushed the silk-workers to take such desperate measures in their own defence, and declares that the *force morale*, if not *force majeure*, has moved from the bourgeoisie to the working classes. That Ballanche absolves the workers from blame is certainly not because he condones their actions or sympathizes with the alleged republicanism of their leaders. Ballanche's horror of republicanism stemming from the Lyon Terror had in no way diminished

from Ballanche to Lamennais" in *The Modern Language Review* 63 (1968): 368.

²³ Ballanche to Hautefeuille, 18 April 1834, in Marquiset, *Ballanche et Madame d'Hautefeuille*, 20.

²⁴ Ballanche to Hautefeuille, 18 May 1834, in Marquiset, *Ballanche et Madame d'Hautefeuille*, 27.

²⁵ Bezucha, *Lyon Uprising*, 182.

²⁶ See Lamennais, *La Liberté trahie* (du procès d'avril et de la République). Préface de Lucien Scheler (Paris: La Bibliothèque française, 1946).

over the intervening years. He, in common with most Lyonnais (largely including the lower classes), associated republicanism with a return of the Terror, something republican publicists noted as a local difficulty in their attempts to proselytize in Lyon.²⁷ Rather, Ballanche believes that the *canuts* were betrayed by their social superiors. Even though he never forgot that his father's life had been saved by his workers at the time of the Lyon Terror, Ballanche fundamentally believes that society is and ought to be controlled from the top. Workers, by their very nature, are liable to run amok if the higher orders fail in their social duties. Since the selfishness of the bourgeoisie left the workers in desperate straits, one cannot really blame them for rioting, even though their actions are deeply injurious to social order and must be suppressed. While Ballanche sympathizes with the plight of the people, he does not trust them—at this stage in the unfolding of social evolution—to control society. Thus, even though Ballanche recognizes that economic grievances were at the heart of the riots, he subordinates them to order and ideology, insisting that economic reform, like political reform, must come from the top down and within the hierarchical structure of society. Ballanche's adamant rejection of activism, and especially violence, as an usurpation of providence and a betrayal of the spiritual nature of society has earned him the title "théologien et poète de la propriété".²⁸

Ballanche considers that the Saint-Simonians share responsibility for the riots with the bourgeoisie because they stirred up the anger of the workers with irresponsible slogans instead of helping to reconcile the classes.²⁹ In an attempt to suppress the Saint-Simonian movement, the July Monarchy had tried, unsuccessfully, to link Saint-Simonian agitation to earlier labour unrest in Lyon in 1831–1832.³⁰ At the trial of *Enfantin* and *Chevalier* in the summer of 1832 the prosecution had to settle for charges of outraging public morality and financial improprieties. Ballanche seems to have remembered the charges of instigation made against the Saint-Simonians and applied them to the 1834 riots. He did not, however, need external suggestion;

²⁷ Bezucha, *Lyon Uprising*, 58, 86.

²⁸ Pierre Michel, *Un mythe romantique: Les Barbares, 1789–1848* (Lyon: Presses Universitaires de Lyon, 1981), 171.

²⁹ Ballanche to Hautefeuille, 25 April and 18 May 1834, in Marquiset, *Ballanche et Mme. d'Hautefeuille*, 21, 26–27.

³⁰ The Saint-Simonians had indeed sent "missions" to Lyon in an attempt to attract workers to their cause, but with little success. See Bezucha, *Lyon Uprising*, 115.

Ballanche's philosophy of history is based on passive trust in providence and cooperation between the classes, so the Saint-Simonians' advocacy of activism condemns them in his eyes even without positive evidence.

Activism is the key to Ballanche's disagreement with both Lamennais and the Saint-Simonians. Lamennais responded in late 1835 to Ballanche's criticisms of his activism (in "Le Dix-neuvième siècle" in *La France catholique* [1834] as well as in his review of *Paroles* and in private correspondence), addressing both the issue of participation in politics in general and the specific charge of irresponsibly inciting the lower orders. Lamennais declares that, first, politics is nothing other than the sum of means by which the Christian social ideas they both hold dear can be realized in the practical realm. Ballanche's scorn of politics, he argues, condemns his ideals to impotency. Second, Ballanche underestimates the strength of establishment opposition to their program; the support of the people is necessary if reform is to be effected.³¹ Ballanche was unmoved by Lamennais' arguments and from this time on they disagreed amicably. Ballanche visited Lamennais regularly during his imprisonment at Saint-Pélagie in 1840–1841.³²

Ballanche's disparagement of active politics in favour of theoretical work did not apply only to those who had taken holy orders. In the 1832 letter to Récamier in which he complains of Lamennais' political activities, Ballanche explains that those who engage in political life see no further than the immediate situation, while those who stand back from the fray are able to grasp the underlying principles that govern society.

Je persiste à croire qu'il faut se mettre au service des idées, et non au service des choses. Ceux qui ne se mêlent point aux affaires actuelles, qui n'ont point à s'y mêler ou qui ne veulent pas s'y mêler ont le premier rôle à jouer dans ce moment. Etrangers à l'époque, c'est eux en définitive qui la gouvernent. . . . Cousin et Villemain ont choisi de prendre part à l'action; par conséquent, ils ont abdiqué leur part dans la théorie et la spéculation. Ils se sont mis au service des choses, transitoires par leur nature, au lieu de se mettre au service des idées qui sont immuables. A mon avis, ils ont mal choisi.³³

³¹ Lamennais to Ballanche, 6 December 1835, in Lamennais, *Correspondance Générale*, 6:523.

³² Gisèle Herve, *Pierre-Simon Ballanche* (Nîmes: Lacour, 1990), 140.

³³ Ballanche to Récamier, 13 October 1832, in Kettler, *Lettres de Ballanche à Madame Récamier*, 605.

For all its promise of social transformation, Ballanche's philosophy of history, as his reaction to the events of 1834 confirms, is essentially conservative. It is not that Ballanche supported the *parti de résistance* (in fact, he detested Guizot and Thiers); it is rather that Ballanche's historiosophy condemns activism as a crime against providence. This opinion placed Ballanche at odds not only with Lamennais but with much of the generation of 1830. The example of Franz Liszt attests to the dilemma Ballanche posed to many readers: his historiosophy inspired their dreams of religio-social transformation, but his condemnation of activism prevented their realization.

Liszt, we recall, got to know Ballanche in 1833 through his Saint-Simonian friends. He met Lamennais, though he must have known about him earlier through Joseph d'Ortigue, only in April 1834 just as *Paroles d'un croyant* was going to press. Liszt was swept away by the militant activism of *Paroles d'un croyant*, which allowed him, in the words of one of his biographers, "to combine his instinctive piety with his revolutionary ardour".³⁴ "Je ne résiste pas au besoin de vous dire un peu", Liszt gushed to his new hero in May 1834,

... combien vos dernières pages m'ont transporté, accablé, déchiré de douleur et d'espoir! ... Mon Dieu, que tout cela est sublime! ... Sublime, prophétique, divin! ... Que de génie, que de charité! ... A dater de ce jour, il est évident, non seulement pour quelques âmes de choix, qui vous aiment et vous suivent depuis longtemps, mais pour le monde entier, il est évident, de la dernière évidence, que le *christianisme au XIX^e siècle*, c'est-à-dire tout l'avenir religieux et politique de l'humanité, est en vous.³⁵

Lamennais replied to Liszt at length, inviting the pianist to his Brittany retreat of La Chênaie, where Liszt spent several weeks in the summer and autumn of 1834. Liszt, let us note, became Lamennais' virtual disciple at precisely the moment, and for precisely the reason, that his old friends and supporters from the *Mémorial catholique* and *l'Avenir* were abandoning him.

During his weeks at La Chênaie, Liszt's mornings were spent discussing aesthetic, political, and religious matters with Lamennais. Afternoons, he worked at the keyboard, beginning several compositions, including *Lyon*, the three *Apparitions*, and *Harmonies poétiques et*

³⁴ Eleanor Perényi, *Liszt: The Artist as Romantic Hero* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1974), 102.

³⁵ Liszt to Lamennais, [10–15] May 1834, in Lamennais, *Correspondance Générale*, 6:603.

religieuses. That the morning discussions influenced the afternoon work is apparent in *Lyon*, an allegro march dedicated to Lamennais.³⁶ *Lyon*, to which Liszt attached the *canuts'* motto: "*Vivre en travaillant ou mourir en combattant*", reflects conversations with Lamennais about the April riots. Liszt carries the revolutionary theme into *Lyon's* musical structure: its tonality undermines the traditional harmonic order, just as the silk workers had sought to undermine the established social order.³⁷ In setting to music his embrace of Lamennais's activist populism, Liszt could not have produced a more pointed rejection of Ballanche's hierarchical insistence that social emancipation must be freely granted by the upper classes. The caustic Heine perceived Liszt's shift in allegiance:

For a long time [Liszt] was enthusiastic about the beautiful philosophy of Saint-Simon; later the spiritualistic, or rather, nebulous ideas of Ballanche befogged him; now he raves about the republican-Catholic doctrines of Lamennais, who has planted the Jacobin cap on the Cross. Heaven knows in what stable he will find his next hobby horse.³⁸

Liszt's admiration for Ballanche is conventionally explained as largely a reflection of his admiration for Lamennais.³⁹ Yet, Liszt had met Ballanche over a year before he was introduced to Lamennais. And when we recall that the years 1833 to 1835 were the years of Ballanche's and Lamennais' closest friendship (they often met at Liszt's house during these years)⁴⁰ and that at this time their views on the

³⁶ For a musical analysis of *Lyon*, see Alexander Main, "Liszt's *Lyon*: Music and the Social Conscience" in *Nineteenth-Century Music* 4 (1980-1981): 233-235. Liszt placed *Lyon* at the head of his piano cycle, "Impressions et poésies", which itself was the first set of *Album d'un voyageur*. *Lyon* was omitted when he reworked the entire cycle under the title *Années de pèlerinage*.

³⁷ Klára Hamburger, *Liszt*, trans. Gyula Gulyás (Budapest: Corvina, 1987), 33; Alan Walker, *Franz Liszt: The Virtuoso Years, 1811-1847* (New York: Knopf, 1983), 157-158.

³⁸ Heinrich Heine, *Concerning the French Stage: Confidential Letters to August Lewald* (1838), Tenth Letter in *Heinrich Heine: Selected Works*, trans. Helen. M. Mustard (New York: Random House, 1973), 125. French text in Heinrich Heine, *Historisch-kritische Gesamtausgabe der Werke*, ed. Manfred Windfuhr, 15 vols. (Hamburg: Hoffmann und Campe, 1975), 12/1:498.

³⁹ Jacques Vier, *La Comtesse d'Agoult et son temps*, 6 vols. (Paris: Armand Colin, 1955-1963), 1:146.

⁴⁰ George Sand described one such gathering: "Un dîner où Liszt avait réuni M. Lamennais, M. Ballanche, le chanteur Nourrit et moi, lui [à Sainte-Beuve] paraissait la chose la plus fantastique qui se put imaginer. Il me demandait ce qui avait pu être imaginer dit entre ces cinq personnes. Je lui répondais que je n'en savais rien, que M. Lamennais avait dû causer avec M. Ballanche, Liszt avec Nourrit, et moi avec le chat de la maison". *Histoire de ma vie*, Ve partie, chapitre VIII in *Oeuvres autobiographiques*, 2 vols., éd. Georges Lubin (Paris: Gallimard, 1971), 2:329.

progressive nature of Christianity and on the religious mission of the artist in society were virtually identical, we may suspect that Liszt embraced Lamennais so easily precisely because he was advocating the sort of ideas that Liszt was already familiar with through Ballanche and the Saint-Simonians. What separated Lamennais from Ballanche, aside from his charisma, was his advocacy of action in support of his philosophy. It is because of this militant dimension that Lamennais briefly became for Liszt the supreme authority in matters of religion and philosophy. Ballanche was not thus a reflection of Lamennais; rather, Lamennais was an extension of Ballanche. Liszt's embrace of Lamennais' activism illustrates in microcosm one aspect of the reconfiguration of forces that pulled apart the *parti social*. The fusion of religion and progress championed by the *parti social* was not abandoned, but many concluded, as Liszt had done, that a passive confidence in the willingness of the upper classes to permit social change was misguided. The operation of providence, it seemed, requires assistance through popular action, and even, in extreme cases, violence, in support of social reform.

The fate of *La France religieuse et poétique* similarly bears witness to how the *parti social* was pulled apart as the allies of the early 1830s went their own ways. The inaugural issue of *La France religieuse et poétique*, despite the high hopes of the summer of 1833, had not yet appeared by the time *Paroles d'un croyant* was published. Although it was still under discussion and Lamennais' supporters were busily trying to enlist further support for the project in the summer of 1834,⁴¹ *Paroles* and the response from Rome killed all hope of the journal ever appearing. Lamennais himself was completely taken up with his battle against the Pope; his militant activism made further collaboration with Ballanche impossible; and virtually all of Lamennais' former collaborators who were to help with the new journal had abandoned him, many denouncing him violently, in the face of the second Papal censure. By January 1835, Lamennais had given up on the *parti social*.⁴² Lamartine, for his part, though his immediate reaction to *Paroles* was that its violence had harmed hopes for the *parti social*,⁴³ soon followed Lamennais in shifting his audience from liberal Catholics to more

⁴¹ François du Breil de Marzan to Lamennais, 28 June 1834, in Lamennais, *Correspondance Générale*, 6:667.

⁴² Lamennais to Eugène Boré, 31 January 1835, in Derré, *Lamennais, ses amis*, 576.

⁴³ "C'est en deux mots l'Evangile de l'insurrection, Babeuf divinisé. Cela me fait grand tort à moi et à mon parti future, parce que rien ne tue une idée comme son

radical groups, including republicans. Nevertheless, as late as February 1836, Lamartine was still pushing for a journal uniting the *parti social* allies: "... parlerons-nous de presse politique? C'est bien vil. Cependant j'en ferai si vous voulez. Organisez cela, mais à la condition que vous, Ballanche, To[c]queville, [Gustave de] Beaumont, Carné, Pagès, etc., nous écrivons ensemble. . . ." ⁴⁴ Nothing came of Lamartine's plan because of the ever-increasing divergences among the former allies.

Beyond the parti social

Even in the early 1830s glory days of the *parti social* Ballanche remained at heart a man of the Restoration and bemoaned the overthrow of the Charter. And if at times he could convince himself that social evolution was unfolding as it ought, his sense of alienation from mainstream society is vividly expressed in an 1833 letter to Bredin:

Je ne saurais te dire, bon ami, combien il m'est pénible de sentir s'en aller ainsi cette société qui dans notre jeunesse semblait se régénérer d'un manière si marquée. Rapelle-toi comme nous en étions tous enchantés et pleins d'espoir. Maintenant, il est manifeste que nous rétrogradons rapidement.

Certes, on a réalisé de grands progrès depuis l'époque où nous étions ensemble à Lyon; mais ces progrès, dont je reconnais la grande importance, ont été réalisés seulement dans l'ordre matériel et presque toujours au détriment des choses de l'ordre moral.

Cette situation déplorable m'épouvante, mon bon ami; je ne sais où cela s'arrêtera. Ce sera à désespérer de l'avenir, si nous n'avions pas foi en la Providence qui seule peut arrêter la dégradation où l'humanité se précipite. ⁴⁵

Ballanche's sense of alienation increased after 1834 as his former allies in the *parti social* became increasingly radical, increasingly unwilling, in Ballanche view, to allow providence to direct the pace of social reform. With the collapse of the *parti social*, the only broad movement that Ballanche endorsed and in which he played a prominent role, he was once again isolated. Nevertheless, while Ballanche

exagération". Lamartine to Aymon de Virieu, 9 May 1834, in Derré, *Lamennais, ses amis*, 576.

⁴⁴ Lamartine to Sainte-Beuve, 23 February 1836, in Sainte-Beuve, *Correspondance générale*, éd. Jean Bonnerot, 6 vols. (Paris: Storck, 1935-1949), 2:30.

⁴⁵ Ballanche to Bredin, 1833, in Claude-Julien Bredin, *Correspondance philosophique et littéraire avec Ballanche* éd. Auguste Viatte (Paris: Bocard, 1928), 290-291.

fully approved of none of the trajectories of the former constituents of the *parti social*, most of them drew on Ballanche to some degree and Ballanche kept in touch with them. By 1848 Ballanche's thought had been carried in many directions. That some of these directions were diametrically opposed to others indicates once again the tensions within Ballanche's own thought. This section sketches the reception and influence of Ballanche's philosophy of history in the late 1830s and 1840s within five intellectual movements that arose out of the *parti social*: religious humanitarianism, social romanticism, social Catholicism, Polish romantic philosophies of history, and the *école lyonnaise*.

Religious humanitarianism

Lamennais' political trajectory after *Paroles d'un croyant* is well known. Less well known is his philosophical trajectory. Around 1830 Lamennais began to work out a Christian philosophy; the task took him fifteen years and resulted in the four volume *Esquisse d'une philosophie* (1840–1846) and its continuation, *De la Société première et de ses lois* (1848, 1850). The *Esquisse*, which provides the philosophical grounding for Lamennais' desired reconciliation of religion and social progress, integrates Bonnet's and Ballanche's palingenetic ideas with Schelling's philosophy of becoming, which Lamennais studied carefully in the early 1830s.

Comme Bonnet et Ballanche, Féli réconcilie l'évolution historique avec la Création. Il explique "la Création dans son évolution normale" comme un devenir progressif qui va du simple au composé, de l'état primordial à l'état civilisé pendant que le monde physique s'achemine vers une diversité de plus en plus grande. Il assure pourtant que les multiples phénomènes restent reliés à l'infini divin qui en fournit la cause. Le dogme chrétien . . . est sujet à un "développement progressif" même si "la science de Dieu" reste inébranlable.⁴⁶

The *Esquisse* is Lamennais' attempt to integrate faith and philosophy, religion and science, by fusing a fully evolutionary world with the immutable, permanent, divine cause that alone explains the world.⁴⁷

The Lamennais of the *Esquisse* rejects the doctrine of the Fall, asserting that the human condition is simply that of a limited being.

⁴⁶ Oscar A. Haac, "Lamennais Philosophe" in *Cahiers Mennaisiens* 29 (1995): 42.

⁴⁷ Haac, "Lamennais Philosophe", 74.

He similarly dismisses the Christian doctrines of sin, grace, and the rehabilitation of fallen humanity by the Man-God as resting on an erroneous conception of moral evil and a confusion of God's order with the finite order of his creatures. Humanity, he says, ought to accept its limitation and set itself the task of following the law of spirit. This includes accepting suffering and even rejoicing in it: "Souffrir pour la justice, pour la patrie, pour l'humanité, est-ce un mal?"⁴⁸ While for Lamennais suffering is "l'énergique et perpétuel aiguillon du progrès",⁴⁹ this does not amount to a doctrine of expiation because there is no Fall to expiate. With no essential taint to corrupt it, Lamennais foresees a glorious future for humanity on this earth. The *Esquisse* amounts to a radical transformation of Christian dogma; in fact, because of its rejection of fundamental doctrines such as the Fall, Lamennais' later philosophy is no longer Christian but humanitarian. Since it nevertheless remains deeply religious, it is a religious humanitarianism.

Lamartine followed a similar trajectory. He broke with orthodox belief in the early 1830s, having, like Ballanche, become convinced that God had chosen him to convey to his contemporaries the key to a new spiritual and social age.⁵⁰ Lamartine's trip to the Near East in 1832–1833, intended to shore up his Christian faith, had the opposite effect. Under the shock of his daughter's death in Beirut and disappointments with Christian holy sites, Lamartine abandoned Catholicism altogether. In its place, he worked out his own religious system, which he presented in *Voyage en Orient* (1835), *Jocelyn* (1836), and *La Chute d'un ange* (1838). Lamartine built his system on the Enlightenment values of reason and perfectibility. In Lamartine's reading of the Gospels, Christ proclaims the triumph of reason over mystery; the tearing of the veil of the Temple at his death signifies the overthrow of the age of mystical obscurities. To the Turgot-Condorcet idea of continuous, irreversible intellectual progress, Lamartine adds

⁴⁸ Lamennais, *Esquisse d'une philosophie* 2:71, quoted in Haac, "Lamennais Philosophie", 54.

⁴⁹ Lamennais, *Esquisse d'une philosophie* 2:73, quoted in Haac, "Lamennais Philosophie", 54.

⁵⁰ Paul Bénichou, *Les Mages romantiques* (Paris: Gallimard, 1988), 22. Among the signs of his election is a variation on Adoration of the Magi story allegedly told by his mother: fleeing the Terror, Mme. de Lamartine had come to Lausanne with her infant son. At their inn she was visited by three Illuminés who asked to see her child, whom they praised and for whom they prophesied great things. Bénichou, *Mages romantiques*, 36–38.

the notion—derived, above all, from Benjamin Constant—that in the course of intellectual progress dogmas and even religions become obsolete and must be replaced by more advanced understandings of truth. Religions, Christianity included, are way-stations along the path of humanity's intellectual development. The religion Lamartine offered as appropriate for his own day is a rationalized Christianity strongly reminiscent of the Deist reduction of Christianity to belief in God, providence, and the immortality of the soul, except that, alongside rationalism and perfectibility, it retains the traditional Christian elements of sacrifice and prayer.⁵¹

The relationship between rational perfectibility and sacrifice is fundamental to *Jocelyn* and *La Chute d'un ange*.⁵² These epic poems present humanity as progressing only through suffering, and particularly the suffering of the innocent. The pervasiveness of suffering, as central here as in Ballanche's social palingenesis, tempers the sunny optimism of Enlightenment perfectibilitarianism with a suitably Romantic *Weltschmerz*. Nevertheless, the sanctification of suffering as the necessary condition of progress in Lamartine's epics does not amount to a doctrine of expiation. And this brings us back to Lamartine's Enlightenment heritage. Among the dogmas jettisoned in his rationalized Christianity is the Fall. *La Chute d'un ange*, the cosmogonic episode of Lamartine's philosophy of history, links suffering to the fall of the angel Cédar into humanity. But Cédar's fall is not an image of Adam's Fall—whether the orthodox Adam or the angelic Adam of the Illuminists—because it is voluntary and guiltless. Cédar chooses to become human in order to rescue a beautiful woman named Daïdha from a band of marauding giants. No concept of original sin underlies Lamartine's philosophy of history; and since there is no original sin, there is nothing to be expiated.⁵³ Lamartine never offers an explanation for the necessity of suffering in place of the doctrine of the Fall. Unlike Ballanche, for whom theodicy was a major element of his philosophy of history, Lamartine is content to admit the impenetrability of divine justice.

⁵¹ D. G. Charlton, "Religious and political thought" in *The French Romantics* 2 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1984, 1:33–75), 52–54; Bénichou, *Mages romantiques*, 65–67.

⁵² For précis of *Jocelyn*, set during the French Revolution, and *La Chute d'un ange*, an epic of primitive times, see Herbert J. Hunt, *The Epic in Nineteenth-Century France* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1941), 161–177. These works were the only episodes completed of Lamartine's "Grand Poème", intended to be an immense visionary epic of the past, present, and future of humanity.

⁵³ Bénichou, *Les Mages romantiques*, 67, 91–92.

Lamartine's fusion of the Enlightenment themes of reason and perfectibility with Romantic religious feeling and historical-mindedness may best be described as a religious humanitarianism. In relation to Ballanche's historiosophy, it retains the link between progress and suffering, but, detaching progress from rehabilitation from the Fall, substitutes for expiatory rehabilitation a rationalist perfectibility. Suffering is pervasive but no longer the motor of progress; reason, not expiation, mediates between humanity and God.

Edgar Quinet (1803–1875) attended the Récamier salon assiduously in the early 1830s, and there became friendly with Ballanche, whose works he had admired as a student in Lyon. When Quinet returned to Lyon in 1839 to teach his first academic course, he dedicated his lectures on the history of religions at the University of Lyon to Ballanche, “le plus spirituel des écrivains de nos jours”.⁵⁴ Quinet is yet another example of a Romantic thinker claiming for himself the task of formulating the faith of modern times. Quinet's faith takes the form of a philosophy of history that blends the Enlightenment themes of liberty and perfectibility with the histories of religions of both the Schelling-Creutzer school and Benjamin Constant.⁵⁵

While Quinet's philosophy of history charts the unfolding of the providential plan for humanity, his Enlightenment perfectibilitarianism detaches it from the doctrine of the Fall. The equivalent of original sin is the oppressing forces—elemental or human—against which humanity must struggle for liberty. And just as orthodox teaching understands suffering in relation to original sin, so Quinet relates suffering to the struggle for liberty. This relation is clearly set out in his 1833 prose epic, *Ahasvérus*.⁵⁶ Quinet transforms the poem's eponymous hero—the Wandering Jew of European legend, doomed to wander the earth forever for having spurned Christ on his way to Calvary—into a figure of journeying, suffering humanity drawn ever onwards by an insatiable thirst for the infinite: “Ahasvérus est l'homme éternel”.⁵⁷ Ahasvérus' interminable sufferings are linked to Christ's, as in the normative legend, but Quinet reverses their relation. At the

⁵⁴ Joseph Buche, *L'Ecole mystique de Lyon* (Paris: Alcan, 1935), 219.

⁵⁵ On Quinet's intellectual formation, see Willy Aeschmann, *La Pensée d'Edgar Quinet. Etude sur la formation de ses idées avec essais de jeunesse et documents inédits* (Paris: Editions Anthropos; Genève: Georg, 1986).

⁵⁶ For an extensive summary of *Ahasvérus*, see Hunt *The Epic in Nineteenth-Century France*, 114–131.

⁵⁷ Edgar Quinet, *Oeuvres complètes*, 30 vols. (Paris: Hachette, 1895–1910; reprinted Genève: Slatkine, 1989–1990), 11:422; see also 11:212.

culmination of the epic, Christ explains to Ahasvérus the purpose of his wanderings: "Je t'avais envoyé du Calvaire pour cueiller après moi dans chaque lieu ce qui restait de douleur dans le monde. Es-tu bien sûr de l'avoir toute bue?"⁵⁸ Once the Universe has attested that Ahasvérus has indeed completely drained the chalice, that he has seen to the end his harvest of sorrows, Christ pardons him and offers him rest. But Ahasvérus declines the pardon, resolving to continue his wanderings (and sufferings) in search of his (read humanity's) celestial destiny.⁵⁹ Ahasvérus' refusal of Christ's pardon is linked to Quinet's perfectibilitarianism, and in two ways. First, since Quinet rejects the doctrine of the Fall, Ahasvérus' sufferings have not been expiatory and there is no offence requiring pardon. Secondly, Christianity is only one—now completed—phase in the spiritual mission of humanity. In the Epilogue personified Eternity declares that Christ and the God of Christianity have fulfilled their mission, and lays them in their sepulchre. Quinet here scandalously dramatizes his fundamental conviction—the subject of his book on the history of religions, *Le génie des religions* (1841)—that in its progress humanity endlessly supersedes outworn religions.⁶⁰ From this perspective, Ahasvérus' destiny was an investiture rather than a curse; a martyrdom rather than a punishment.⁶¹

In his review of *Ahasvérus* for the *Revue de progrès social*, Alexandre Saint-Chéron measures it against *Vision d'Hébal*, rebuking Quinet for his pessimism and impiety in presenting Christianity as exhausted and inadequate for modern times and praising Ballanche's philosophy of history in which Christianity retains a glorious mission in the present and future.⁶² Philippe Hauger, by 1834 no longer a Fourierist, took up Quinet's defence. While no less adulatory toward Ballanche than Saint-Chéron, Hauger argues that Quinet's work is neither impious nor incompatible with Ballanche. Quinet depicts the death not of Christianity itself but merely of the traditional form of Christianity; like Ballanche, Quinet believes that as religion evolves in step with the evolution of humanity its dogmas must be reinterpreted to match

⁵⁸ Quinet, *Oeuvres complètes*, 11:415.

⁵⁹ Quinet, *Oeuvres complètes*, 11:422. See Bénichou, *Le Temps des prophètes* (Paris: Gallimard, 1977), 464–465.

⁶⁰ Bénichou, *Temps des prophètes*, 462–463, 467; Hunt, *The Epic in Nineteenth-Century France*, 129.

⁶¹ Bénichou, *Temps des prophètes*, 464–465. Cf. Ballanche's principle that the decree of condemnation contained the promise of redemption.

⁶² Saint-Chéron, "Ahasvérus" in *Revue de progrès social* 3 (1834): 308–322.

the needs of each new phase of development.⁶³ Quinet endorsed Hauger's reading in a letter to the journal.⁶⁴ Ballanche himself had no doubts about the relationship of Quinet's work to his own: "Je relis *Ahasvérus*. Entre nous, il baisse dans ma pensée".⁶⁵ The assimilation of Quinet to Ballanche, however, camouflaged some fundamental divergences that came into the open in Quinet's works of the early 1840s.

In *Le génie des religions* Quinet proposes to follow the life of the divine Spirit across the world, to recount the annals of the Eternal incarnated in time. In this progression of the Spirit, each continent is to be regarded as a particular sanctuary that corresponds to the belief that was developed there, and which is itself only one rite in the single universal religion.⁶⁶ Quinet returned to the story of the unfolding of religion, and its social, political, and artistic correlates, in *Christianisme et la Révolution française* (1845), which he described as a continuation of *Le génie des religions* under a different form:

Tous les deux, embrassant la religion comme la substance de l'humanité, depuis les temps les plus anciens jusqu'aux nôtres, ont pour but de faire découler les révolutions politiques et sociales des révolutions accomplies dans la conception de l'idée de Dieu, et de montrer ainsi l'histoire du monde civil se formant éternellement en sa source première.⁶⁷

The two volumes together present Quinet's version of human progress as the story of a ceaseless struggle for liberty, first of human tribes against the necessity of Nature, then of reason against dogma and sacerdotal systems, and finally, in modern times, of individuals against despotisms that seek to restrain their moral self-determination. The shift from history of religions to social and political history merely marks a new phase in a single, providentially-directed process of perfectibility. Quinet insists, in highly Ballanchean language, that civil society arises out of religion and that political and social revolutions extend humanity's understanding of the divine purpose. Hence, Quinet presents *Le génie des religions* and *Christianisme et la Révolution française* as successive episodes of the same story.⁶⁸ The linkage of

⁶³ Hauger, "Ahasvérus" in *Revue du progrès social* 8 (1834): 596–619.

⁶⁴ *Revue du progrès social* (1834): 618.

⁶⁵ Ballanche to Hautefeuille, 27 August 1834, in Marquiset, *Ballanche et Mme. d'Hautefeuille*, 30.

⁶⁶ Quinet, *Le génie des religions* in *Oeuvres complètes*, 1:12, 15, 18.

⁶⁷ Quinet, Avertissement de la Deuxième édition (1850) of *Le génie des religions* in *Oeuvres complètes*, 1:iii.

⁶⁸ Quinet, Avertissement de la Deuxième édition (1850) of *Le génie des religions* in Quinet, *Oeuvres complètes*, 1:iii.

Christianity with the French Revolution is entirely typical of the French Romantics, for whom the Revolution, as the defining event of the modern world, marks an epochal moment in the unfolding of history. In Quinet's version, the historical forms of Christianity have carried the gospel of liberty into modern times, but now they, and especially Roman Catholicism, have become reactionary.⁶⁹ Individual conscience is now the home of the gospel of liberty, which must be made manifest in social action. There is no longer any distinction whatsoever between the religious, the moral, and the socio-political realms.

Quinet, like Lamennais and Lamartine, presents his philosophy of history as the faith that completes and supersedes Christianity. The later Quinet will be a resolute opponent of the Catholic Church under the Second Empire, for which he will both be dismissed, along with Michelet and Adam Mickiewicz, from his Chair at the Collège de France by Louis Napoleon, and honoured as a spiritual father of the Third Republic by its anticlerical founders.⁷⁰ Nevertheless, Quinet was not a secular thinker; his historical vision discovers a religious meaning in history: the progressive acquisition of liberty is carried out under the guidance of providence and fulfils the divine plan for humanity. His philosophy of history, again like those of Lamennais and Lamartine, is a religious humanitarianism.

As philosophies of history, the religious humanitarianisms of Lamennais, Lamartine, and Quinet are structurally very similar to the most influential of all the religious humanitarianisms of the mid-nineteenth century, that of Pierre Leroux (see Chapter Fifteen). Leroux, in *De l'Humanité* (1840) and other works, similarly rejects original sin, the divine origin of Christianity, and the expectation of a spiritual after-life, while retaining the ideas—derived from Ballanche, *inter alia*—of the preexistence of souls, life as a series of expiations, terrestrial progress as both social and spiritual, the successive unfolding of a single revelation, and the value of ancient traditions.⁷¹

The consequence of the substitution in these various religious humanitarianisms of rationalist perfectibilitarianism for the Christian telos of rehabilitation from the Fall is that progress, while still providen-

⁶⁹ Quinet attacks the Roman Catholic church in *Les Jésuites* (1843) and *L'Ultramontanisme* (1844).

⁷⁰ See Ceri Crossley, *Edgar Quinet (1803–1875): A Study in Romantic Thought* (Lexington, KY: French Forum, 1983), 53–55.

⁷¹ On Leroux and Ballanche, see Gaston Frainnet, *Essai sur la philosophie de Pierre-Simon Ballanche* (Paris: Picard, 1903), 257–260.

tially guided, is no longer merely the sign—as for the Illuminists—or even the means—as for Ballanche—of spiritual reintegration; it has become the end in itself. Salvation is now conceived of as a spiritualization of terrestrial humanity within the historical process. Whereas Ballanche historicized the process of reintegration in his historiosophy, Lamennais, Lamartine, Quinet, and Leroux historicize reintegration itself. Humanity, we might say, is no longer travelling toward the Celestial City; it has taken its first step toward the Finland Station. Similarly, while suffering remains prominent in humanitarian thought, the substitution of rationalist perfectibility for expiatory rehabilitation dissolves Ballanche's historiosophic synthesis of progress and suffering. While suffering remains pervasive in these works, it is no longer the motor of progress; reason, not expiation, mediates between humanity and God. In the absence of original sin requiring expiation, the role of suffering in the progress of humanity is vague. Humanitarians emphasize suffering out of religious feeling, or perhaps realism, not because the logic of their philosophies of history demands it.

Social romanticism

Franz Liszt had not renounced Ballanche completely in his embrace of Lamennais' activism. It was on the trip up to La Chêснаie that Liszt read Ballanche's *Orphée* and wrote the enthusiastic letter of 13 September 1834 to Marie d'Agoult quoted in the previous chapter. The next year, in "De la situation des artistes", Liszt wrote: "MM. Ballanche, Lamartine, et Victor Hugo surtout, on admirablement compris et prophétisé la grandeur sociale de l'art, *cette noble couronne du génie plébéien*".⁷² Not only does Liszt here include Ballanche among the greatest writers of the age, but, as Busst notes, the very phrase "*cette noble couronne du génie plébéien*" comes from *Vision d'Hébal*.⁷³ Liszt's continuing enthusiasm for Ballanche was well known in the *beau monde*; Heinrich Heine made it (as well as Ballanche) the target of one of his railleries in the *Gazette musicale* when he purported to

⁷² Quoted in A. J. L. Busst, "Ballanche and Saint-Simonism" in *Australian Journal of French Studies* 9 (1972): 292.

⁷³ The passage quoted by Liszt appears on page 163 of Busst's edition of *Vision d'Hébal*.

describe, in the second of his “Nuits Florentines” (May 1836), Liszt’s contribution to a soirée in the Chaussée d’Antin:

Franz Liszt, having allowed himself to be drawn to the piano, swept back his hair from his gifted forehead and served one up of his most brilliant battles. The keys appeared to bleed. If I am not mistaken, he played a passage from the *Palingénésie* by Ballanche, whose ideas he translated into music—a very useful thing for those who are incapable of reading the works of the renowned writer in their original form.⁷⁴

For some time afterward Liszt was forced to explain to those who excitedly requested him to play his latest fugue on themes from *Palingénésie* that it existed only in Heine’s imagination.⁷⁵

Liszt’s ongoing admiration for Ballanche notwithstanding, Marie d’Agoult, an independent thinker in her own right, may have been more influenced by Ballanche. The comtesse, who wrote works of history and philosophy under the name Daniel Stern, embraced both the concept and the word *palingénésie* in her *Essai sur la Liberté* (1847), *Esquisses morales et politiques* (1849), and *Histoire de la Révolution de 1848* (1850–1853).⁷⁶ Both Liszt and Agoult retained their affection for Ballanche after they ceased to see him regularly. Upon Hugo’s election into the Académie française in 1841, Agoult remarked that Ballanche ought to be next.⁷⁷

The novelist George Sand kept her distance, despite Saint-Beuve’s best efforts, from the Abbaye-aux-Bois salon: “J’ai été invitée chez Kératry et chez Mme. Récamier. J’ai eu le bon sens de refuser”.⁷⁸

⁷⁴ Franz Liszt, *An Artist’s Journey: Lettres d’un bachelier ès musique*, trans. Charles Suttoni (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989), 221 n. 8. French text in Heine, *Historisch-kritische Gesamtausgabe der Werke*, 5:352.

⁷⁵ “To Heinrich Heine, 15 April 1838” in Liszt, *An Artist’s Journey*, 102. Liszt’s friend, Hector Berlioz, another admirer of Ballanche, really did plan to set an episode of *Orphée* to music: “Il y a longtemps d’ailleurs que je cherche à écrire quelque chose sur l’*Erigone* de Ballanche (admirable poète!). C’est là que je voudrais présenter à madame d’A[go]ult”. Berlioz to Liszt, 8 February 1838, in Berlioz, *Les Années romantiques, 1819–1842*. Correspondance publiée par Julien Tiersot (Paris: Calmann-Lévy, 1907), 365. Two years later Ballanche reported that the piece was completed, with a libretto by Emile Duchamps. Ballanche to Récamier, 16 August 1840, in Kettler, *Lettres de Ballanche à Madame Récamier*, 684. In fact, Berlioz completed only a few fragments of the score (extant at the Bibliothèque du Conservatoire, Paris). Jacques Barzun, *Berlioz and the Romantic Century*, 2 vols. (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1950), 1:292.

⁷⁶ Vier, *La Comtesse d’Agoult et son temps*, 3:177–178; 4:170–171.

⁷⁷ Agoult to Liszt, 9 January 1841, in Liszt, *Correspondance de Liszt et de la comtesse d’Agoult*, 2:103.

⁷⁸ Sand to Jules Boucoiran, 12 February 1831, in George Sand, *Correspondance 1812–1872*, éd. Georges Lubin, 22 vols. (Paris: Garnier, 1964–1987), 1:801.

When she and Liszt became friends in 1835, she was surprised to discover that Ballanche was one of his favourite writers. Sand herself avoided reading any of Ballanche's works for another year, but when she gave in and read *Orphée* in February 1836 she found herself captivated: "Dites à Franz que j'ai lu *Orphée* ces jours-ci, et que je suis tombée dans des extases incroyables. C'est le premier ouvrage de Ballanche que je lis. Je ne comprends pas tout. Mais ce que je comprends m'enchanté".⁷⁹ She was not just humouring her friend; three months later, lending her copy of *Orphée* to another friend, her praise was even more lavish: "Je vous envoie demain *Orphée* de Ballanche. C'est un livre que j'aime passionnément. Je vous donne un mois pour le lire, ni plus ni moins".⁸⁰ By November 1836, Sand was numbering Ballanche among the three writers she most admired.⁸¹

The year 1835 was a epochal year in the life of George Sand. Within a period of a few months she met Liszt, Lamennais, and Ballanche. She also met, and fell in love with, Michel de Bourges, a republican lawyer who had attracted wide attention by his brilliant defence of the leaders in the Lyon riots of the preceding year. Bourges swept Sand into republicanism; Liszt introduced her to Lamennais, whom she "revered as a saint", to Ballanche, and interested her in Saint-Simonianism (later that year the remnant of the Paris family began sending her gifts in the hope that she would accept the role of their Female Messiah). In some perplexity over how to reconcile the competing doctrines these men represented, Sand turned to Sainte-Beuve for help. She sought "a single social and religious truth"; that is, a doctrine that would enable her to reconcile the distinct religious philosophies of Ballanche and of Lamennais with the republicanism of Michel de Bourges and with the social idealism of the Saint-Simonians. Sainte-Beuve introduced her to Pierre Leroux, with the result that Leroux, whose thought was itself just such a synthesis, quickly became Sand's *maître à pensée*. Several of her novels served to make Leroux's ideas more widely known, and to the same end she created three journals, the *Revue Indépendante* (founded 1841), the regional *Eclairneur de l'Indre* (1844–1848), and the *Revue Sociale* (1845–1850).⁸² Echoes of

⁷⁹ Sand to Marie d'Agoult, 26 February 1836, in Sand, *Correspondance*, 3:291.

⁸⁰ Sand to l'abbé Georges Rochet, 17 May 1836, in *Correspondance*, 3:387–388.

⁸¹ Or so she told Ferdinand Denis. See entry for 5 November 1836 in Denis, *Journal (1829–1848)*, éd. Pierre Moreau (Paris: Plon, 1932), 60.

⁸² David Owen Evans, *Social Romanticism in France, 1830–1848* (Oxford: Clarendon

Ballanche are discernable in several of Sand's novels, notably *Lélia* (1833) and *Les Sept Cordes de la lyre* (1839).⁸³

Sand's novels were part of an extensive social literature protesting against the conditions produced as the Industrial Revolution gathered steam in July Monarchy France. This social romanticism, as D. O. Evans calls it, flourished between 1830 and 1848 and culminated in the works of Victor Hugo, above all *Les Misérables* (1861).⁸⁴ Hugo himself was thoroughly familiar with Ballanche and his works. He had frequented the Abbaye-aux Bois salon since the early 1820s, when he had collaborated on Chateaubriand's *Conservateur littéraire*, and his close friendship with Sainte-Beuve from 1827 drew him still closer. Joseph Buche has demonstrated the dependence of the episode of the Bishop of Digne and the regicide conventionnel in *Les Misérables* (Book I, chapter 10) on Ballanche's *L'Homme sans nom*.⁸⁵

Ballanche's contribution to the literature of social romanticism parallels his influence on the closely related movement of religious humanitarianism. The works of Sand and Hugo politicize and radicalize Ballanche's plebeianism (plebeians as principle of social progress) in a manner consonant with Leroux's use of Ballanche (see Chapter Fifteen). Notes Hugo wrote for *Les Misérables* demonstrate the religious feeling that animates social romanticism and links it to Ballanche, despite its more radical social program:

Do away with poverty and destitution we can; but do away with suffering we cannot. Suffering, we profoundly believe, is the law of this earth, until some new divine dispensation. . . . The quantity of fatality that depends on man is called Penury and can be abolished; the quantity of fatality that depends on the unknown is called Sorrow and can only be contemplated in fear and trembling.⁸⁶

Ballanche, finally, contributed importantly to the intellectual world of another great novelist, Honoré de Balzac.⁸⁷ Arlette Michel has demonstrated that Balzac's interest in Ballanche peaked between 1830

Press, 1951), 38–41. Sand gives her account of these events in *Histoire de ma vie*, Book 5, chapter 9.

⁸³ See Kettler, *Lettres de Ballanche à Madame Récamiér*, 239, 279–280.

⁸⁴ Evans, *Social Romanticism*, 37.

⁸⁵ Joseph Buche, *Ballanche et Victor Hugo: Une source des "Misérables"* (Paris: Colin, 1927 [Extrait de la *Revue d'Histoire Littéraire de la France*, April–June 1927]), 10–13. On Ballanche's contribution to Hugo's mythopoeic imagination, see Pierre Albouy, *La Création mythologique chez Victor Hugo* (Paris: J. Corti, 1985).

⁸⁶ Quoted in Evans, *Social Romanticism in France*, 80.

⁸⁷ See Henri Evans, *Louis Lambert et la philosophie de Balzac* (Paris: J. Corti, 1951), 193–195.

and 1833, years during which he shared Ballanche's palingenetic hope for a religio-social transformation of the world. Balzac's "Lettre à M. Ch. Nodier" in *Revue de Paris*, in which he defends Ballanche's social palingenesis, dates from 1832. From 1833 onwards, Balzac increasingly limited his hopes for regeneration to the religious realm and regarded the social sphere with scepticism and increasing pessimism.⁸⁸

Social Catholicism

The *Revue européenne* initially survived the condemnation of Lamennais by expressing its unreserved adhesion to *Singulari nos*, but its audience was gone. Its disappearance at the end of 1834 silenced the last voice of Mennaisian liberal Catholicism.⁸⁹ Montalembert, it is true, continued to address the Chamber of Peers in the language of *l'Avenir*, opposing in 1835 the September laws and demanding full liberty in education and association for Catholics. He quickly discovered, however, that liberals distrusted him as a Catholic, while conservatives feared him as a revolutionary. No doubt, Ballanche could sympathize. While Montalembert attempted to persevere with some aspects of the political agenda of *l'Avenir*, other former Mennaisians focussed on social matters. Charles de Caux, for example, denounced the social consequences of industrialism in Catholic journals such as *L'Université Catholique* and *L'Univers*. The former Mennaisians, however, were understandably cautious in their suggestions for reform. It was two younger men, Frédéric Ozanam (1813–1853) and Armand de Melun (1807–1877), who effectively established social Catholicism in France.

Ozanam founded the Society of St. Vincent de Paul in 1833 while still a student in Paris. The society sought to alleviate the misery of the poor through charity. Society members, drawn from the middle and upper classes, visited the poor and provided them with food and clothing. Most importantly, to Ozanam's mind, the activities of the Society broke through class barriers to establish personal contact, enabling both donors and recipients to live a genuine Christian life of prayer and mutual encouragement. Armand de Melun's *patronage* clubs, which would dominate the conservative mainstream of French social Catholicism between 1840 and 1870, were associations of

⁸⁸ Arlette Michel, "Balzac, Ballanche et l'idée de progrès" in *Revue des sciences humaines* 34 (1969): 237–248.

⁸⁹ Derré, *Lamennais, ses amis*, 527.

wealthy Catholics in which piecemeal charity was replaced by a system of Christian education for the poor. Melun's idea was that by providing formal teaching to the poor, society could be completely regenerated through charitable action rather than violence.⁹⁰

The social Catholics, in short, having learnt the lesson of Lamennais, proposed charity rather than social reorganization as the solution to the ills produced by industrialization. Their response is entirely in accord with Ballanche's doctrine of transition to the new social order by means of the gradual, peaceful spread of charity into civil society. Melun must have known Ballanche; he was a regular at Mme. Swetchine's salon in the 1830s and was friendly with Montalembert and the former *l'Avenir* group. Nevertheless, his social ideas are part of a general movement among socially concerned Catholics of the period and are not directly indebted to Ballanche. The case of Ozanam, the son of a wealthy Lyon family, is quite different. Ozanam had read Ballanche as a student, and when he moved to Paris in 1831 he met Ballanche at the house of the Ampères, who were family friends, and introduced himself as an admirer. Although he reserved judgement on certain specific points, Ozanam embraced the overall direction of Ballanche's thought. Further, as his brother recalled, Ballanche's gentleness and modesty impressed as a model of the Christian life.⁹¹ In an appreciation of Ballanche, written shortly after his death, Ozanam repeats his admiration for Ballanche and defends him against charges of unorthodoxy.⁹² Ideas derived from Ballanche are easily discernible in Ozanam's early *Réflexions sur la doctrine de Saint-Simon* (1831) and in his letters to Jean-Jacques Ampère and Ernest Falconnet of the 1830s.⁹³ Ozanam founded the Society of St. Vincent de Paul at the very peak of Ballanche's influence on him.

Philippe Buchez, another pillar of French social Catholicism, sought to institutionalize his version of Christian socialism through founding working-class co-operatives and publishing an influential journal, *L'Atelier* (1840–1850). Through Buchez, whose indebtedness to Ballanche we noted in chapter Fifteen, Ballanche's influence percolated into the thought of younger social Catholics such as abbé Henri Maret,

⁹⁰ Paul Misner, *Social Catholicism in Europe from the Onset of Industrialization to the First World War* (New York: Crossroad, 1991), 59, 63–66.

⁹¹ C.-A. Ozanam, *Vie de Frédéric Ozanam* (Paris: Poussielgue, 3e édition 1889), 120–121.

⁹² Antoine Frédéric Ozanam, "Ballanche" in *Mélanges* (1848) in *Oeuvres complètes*, 11 vols. (Paris: Lecoffre, 1862–1873), 8:89–90.

⁹³ Ozanam, *Lettres de Frédéric Ozanam, 1831–1853* in *Oeuvres complètes*, 1: passim.

Henri Feugueray, and Auguste Ott (who wrote an obituary for Ballanche in the *Revue Nationale*).⁹⁴ Amand Rastoul considers Ballanche to be “le père de toutes les formes du catholicisme social”.⁹⁵

Social Catholic literature of the 1830s and 1840s similarly drew inspiration from Ballanche. The poet Justin Maurice, whose “poésie sociale, humanitaire, et chrétienne” fuses suffering, social action, and the promise of the triumph of Christianity in a utopian future, dedicated his *Au pied de la croix* (1835) to Ballanche. Alphonse Le Flaguais’ *Etudes du siècle et Pages du cœur* (1836), also dedicated to Ballanche and containing poems on “Jésus, l’apôtre de tous les progrès”, announces that the present “transformation laborieuse” heralds the establishment of a new age on the twin gospel bases, “aussi saintes que solidaires”, of morality and liberty. Jules Canonges’ *Le Christ consolateur et libérateur* (1847) may be cited as a final example of social Catholic lyric poetry inspired by Ballanche.⁹⁶ Ballanche’s letters to Hautefeuille in the early 1840s contain numerous references—somewhat condescending in tone—to Justin Maurice, his works, and his travels.

Ballanche’s conception of social evolution as the triumph of plebeianism and its theme of Christ the emancipator contributed greatly to the union between socialist utopianism and Christian discourse effected in the 1830s and 1840s. Several writers explicitly identified themselves as disciples of Ballanche in their attempt to give political sense to the Christian faith. Examples include Eloi Jourdan (pseudonym of Charles Saint-Foi), *Livre du peuple et des rois* (1839) and P. V. Glade, *Du progrès religieux* (1838).⁹⁷ Ballanche’s clear favourite among these writers was Martial Guillemon. In *De l’intelligence et de la foi* (1840), Guillemon worked out a new version of Ballanche’s theory of initiation, while his *L’Homme sans asile* (1845), inspired by *Ville des Expiations* and dedicated to “M. Ballanche, ami vénérée et très cher”, attacks capital punishment. Ballanche made Guillemon the editor of the 1841 edition of *Antigone* and *L’Homme sans nom* (itself evidence of Ballanche’s ongoing influence), and permitted him to write an epilogue underscoring the unity of these two works in light of the doctrines of *Palingénésie sociale*. Ballanche’s letters to Hautefeuille show that he considered Guillemon

⁹⁴ Busst, “Ballanche and Saint-Simonism”, 295–296.

⁹⁵ Ballanche, *La Ville des Expiations*, éd. Rastoul (Paris: Editions des Presses Françaises, 1926), lxxxix.

⁹⁶ Frank Paul Bowman, *Le Christ des Barricades, 1789–1848* (Paris: Cerf, 1987), 255–257.

⁹⁷ Bowman, *Christ des Barricades*, 332–335.

an ally not only in philosophy and literature but also in his scientific endeavours (see Chapter Seventeen).

In the summer of 1845, when Récamier was at Dieppe with Amélie Lenormant and Ballanche was at Saint-Vrain and missing her terribly, Ballanche at once acknowledged and belittled the discipleship of Maurice and Guillemon: "Ici, j'ai deux hommes qui se regard comme mes fils, M. Guillemon et Justin Maurice; Mme. d'Hautefeuille elle-même se considère comme la fille d'Hébal; ceci ne me console point de n'être pas auprès de vous et me laisse tous mes regrets".⁹⁸

The various strands of humanitarianism and social gospel converge in the "Gironde" of the February Revolution of 1848. The roles of Lamennais, Quinet, and particularly Lamartine in the events of 1848 are well known, as is that of Buchez, who was elected president of the Assemblée Nationale in April. Ozanam and his colleagues, who had developed in the late 1840s a movement for "Christian democracy" in which the goal of charity would be the authentic emancipation of the lower classes and not their continued oppression, welcomed the February Revolution by founding a new daily newspaper. *L'Ère nouvelle*, the voice of Christian democracy, appeared from 15 April 1848 to 1 April 1849.⁹⁹ The emancipatory function of Christianity was so often emphasized in the middle decades of the nineteenth century that when Gustave Flaubert compiled his *Dictionnaire des idées reçues* in the 1870s he offered as the full definition of Christianity: "Freed the slaves". Though Ballanche would have hated both 1848 and the very idea of a Christian *democracy*, his social evolutionary interpretation of Christianity contributed powerfully to raising the notion of the emancipatory function of Christianity to the status of cliché. "[M]ore than anyone else, [Ballanche] made possible the socialist readings of the Gospel so common in the 1840s."¹⁰⁰

Polish philosophies of history

Ballanche's interest in Poland was reciprocated in the thought of several Polish romantic philosophers. While in the case of Mickiewicz it

⁹⁸ Ballanche to Récamier, 28 August 1845, in Kettler, *Lettres de Ballanche à Madame Récamier*, 721.

⁹⁹ See Misner, *Social Catholicism in Europe*, 79–87.

¹⁰⁰ Frank Paul Bowman, "Illuminism, utopia, mythology" in D. G. Charlton, ed., *The French Romantics*, 2 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 1:86. See also Bowman, *Le Christ des barricades*, 52–53.

is more a matter of parallels, the mathematician-philosopher-messianist Jozef Maria Hoëne-Wronski, the poet-philosopher Zygmunt Krasinski, and, to a lesser extent, the philosopher August Cieszkowski unquestionably drew on Ballanche's philosophy of history.

Hoëne-Wronski's (1776–1853) "Absolute philosophy", which he developed from 1803, is a rationalist (in the sense of a Schellingian-like Reason that attains the Infinite) Messianism designed both to reform all the sciences and to be the instrument for the universal regeneration of humanity. Wronski's Absolute is a creative force that is the ground of both the universe and of its own being. The process of creation moves from "primitive unity" to "crowning unity" through the successive drawing apart and drawing together of the two poles of the Absolute, Being and Knowing. Human beings are at once created, and endowed with a potential capacity for creation and auto-creation. While human reason is infinitely weaker than the Divine Reason, it is ultimately identical with the Absolute.¹⁰¹

Wronski's philosophy of history, which he began working on around 1814, interprets human history as a process of "progressive regression", of a return to God through which existence in the world is replaced with existence in the Absolute. The end of history is the liberation of humanity from the conditions of physical existence and its rebirth in immortality as the new Son of God. Wronski divided history into three great ages. The first was the age of direct rule by providence in which humanity did not know its destiny. The second age is an era of transition; providence has ceased to act directly, but humanity has not yet grasped its destiny and is therefore ignorant of the correct course of action. The third age will be an of harmony in which human reason reconciles itself with the divine laws. We are now well advanced in the second age; the intellectual confusion of the age of transition has produced the contemporary state of "social antinomy", which is manifested in the political realm by the struggle between conservatives—the party of feeling, of the Good, of revelation and divine right—and liberals—the party of cognition, of the True, of empiricism and civil rights. The attempt of each party to make absolute the partial truth it represents threatens humanity with annihilation. Wronski's Messianism, which is at once absolute philosophy and absolute religion, resolves the social antinomy and inaugurates the third age by proving that the aims of the two parties are not incompatible

¹⁰¹ Andrzej Walicki, *Philosophy and Romantic Nationalism: The Case of Poland* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1982), 108, 114–115. See also chapter Seventeen.

but complementary: immortality (the aim of the Right) can only be achieved through the creative spontaneity of reason (the aim of the Left), which in turn is meaningless if applied only to physical, this-worldly matters.¹⁰²

Wronski's Messianism offers striking similarities to the philosophy of history Ballanche worked out over the same years and in the same city. Wronski was a notoriously prickly individual who claimed absolute originality for his thought. Nevertheless, he unquestionably absorbed influences, and none more than from Ballanche. Wronski's Messianist philosophy of history reworks the social and spiritual reconciliation of Ballanche's historiosophy in the language of German romantic philosophy.¹⁰³ Ballanche, for his part, criticized Wronski for subdividing history into three stages, thereby breaking Christian unity, and for positing the end of history as the acquisition of something new, rather than the reconquest of what was lost in the Fall.¹⁰⁴

Zygmunt Krasinski (1812–1859), who studied Ballanche while a student in Geneva, found in *Palingénésie sociale* a means of reconciling providence with the pervasive suffering of life in the world. Ballanche's philosophy of history, especially its social evolutionary, theodical, mythographic, and symbolic aspects, are easily discernible in Krasinski's early works, above all *La Comédie non-divine* (1834).¹⁰⁵ Krasinski's thought became more heterodox following his Christmas 1841 experience of a state of rapture in which he received a revelation of a vision of a new Christianity, regenerated and supplemented by the martyrdom of Poland. From then on, he preached a new religion in which the influence of Pierre Leroux's religious humanitarianism supplanted Ballanche's social palingenesis.¹⁰⁶

August Cieszkowski (1814–1894) got to know Ballanche personally in Paris in 1838. The next year in Italy he met Zygmunt Krasinski, who, despite some ideological differences (Krasinski was more conservative), became a life-long friend. In *Prolegomena zur Historiosophie* (1838),

¹⁰² Walicki, *Philosophy and Romantic Nationalism*, 116–117.

¹⁰³ W. M. Kozłowski, *Hoëne-Wronski and Ballanche: Essai sur la filiation des idées philosophiques au début du XIX^e siècle* (Paris: Charcornac, 1930), 36–38, 60. This work is a reprint of chapters one and two of Kozłowski's *Les Idées Françaises dans la Philosophie Nationale et la Poésie patriotique de la Pologne* (Grenoble: Aubert, 1923).

¹⁰⁴ According to a note on a loose sheet in BML MSS 1806–1810, Dossier 19.

¹⁰⁵ Maria Straszewska, "Pierre-Simon Ballanche et le cercle polonais" in *Les Contacts religieux Franco-polonais du moyen âge à nos jours. Relations, influences, images d'un pays vu par l'autre* (Paris: CNRS, 1985), 317–319.

¹⁰⁶ Walicki, *Philosophy and Romantic Nationalism*, 285.

Cieszkowski confronted Hegel's philosophy of history with the messianism of the Polish romantics. Orthodox Hegelianism is deeply anti-messianic because it claims that the Spirit has already completed its development in history and that no new revelation can be expected since historical Christianity is an "absolute religion". Cieszkowski argues that the dialectics of history must include the future because otherwise philosophy of history cannot be raised to the level of the absolute knowledge of history. In Cieszkowski's usage, the term "*Historiosophie*" expresses the absolute knowledge of history that both completes and transcends the Hegelian "age of Thought". As such, Cieszkowski's historiosophy, which conflates the millenarianism of Joachim de Fiori and medieval chiliasts with the nineteenth-century German and French philosophies of history, attempts to reconcile a theistic providentialism, in which the historical process is directed from above by a transcendent God, with a conception of immanent historical reason, by which history is a progressive process of human emancipation.¹⁰⁷

In *Gott und Palingenesie* (1842) Cieszkowski worked out his conception of spirit as a synthesis of idea and nature, thought and matter, that underlies his philosophy of history. Cieszkowski overcomes the Christian dualism of matter and spirit by conceiving of matter as an inalienable, constitutive part of spirit, thereby philosophically grounding his millenarian "terrestrialization" of the Kingdom of God. The second, more esoteric, part of *Gott und Palingenesie* (the manuscript of which was, reputedly, destroyed by Krasinski, who feared that its unorthodox religious views would compromise his friend should it be confiscated by the Russian police) developed Cieszkowski's "palingenetic" conception of immortality, according to which the immortality of the soul consists in a progressive perfecting of oneself through a series of incarnations.¹⁰⁸

Despite the very Ballanchean-sounding titles of two of his major works, *Prolegomena zur Historiosophie* and *Gott und Palingenesie*, Ballanche's influence on Cieszkowski was limited and largely indirect. While the term "palingenesis" ultimately derives from Ballanche, Cieszkowski most likely received it via Krasinski and interpreted it in terms of the speculation on individual reincarnation of Jean Reynaud and other Saint-Simonian dissidents rather than of Ballanche's system of social rebirths. Similarly, Cieszkowski's "historiosophy" engages post-Hegelian

¹⁰⁷ Walicki, *Philosophy and Romantic Nationalism*, 133, 296–297.

¹⁰⁸ Walicki, *Philosophy and Romantic Nationalism*, 147–149.

philosophy of history, and drew on Ballanche's only indirectly through the intermediaries of the French humanitarian philosophies of history of the 1830s.

Ecole lyonnaise

The best known, though least important historically, of those whom Ballanche influenced is the *école lyonnaise*, a group of young poets and philosophers in Lyon who proclaimed him their master. Ballanche was pleased by their regard for him, though he in no way enforced a unity of thought or vetted their works. Indeed, the diversity in the directions taken by these writers illustrates the numerous tendencies held in tension in Ballanche's own thought. The leader of the group was the future Academician, Victor de Laprade, whom Hunt has discussed at length as an indispensable link between Romantics and Parnassians in his study on *The Epic in Nineteenth-Century France*. In his youth Laprade went through a crisis of religious doubt, then passed under the influence of Martinism (then returning into favour at Lyon through the renewed activity of the masonic lodges) before discovering Ballanche and, above all, Quinet. Laprade attended Quinet's Lyon lectures on the history of religions; his poem, *Eleusis* (1841), is a poeticized *La génie des religions*. *Psyché* (1841), however, published only a month after *Eleusis*, marks both the beginning of Laprade's return to Catholic orthodoxy and the elevation of Ballanche over Quinet in his thought. The interpretation of history presented in *Psyché* fuses the doctrine of perfectibility with the Christian drama of the Fall, punishment, and rehabilitation in the manner of *Palingénésie sociale*. In the years after *Psyché*, Laprade became more and more orthodox. And while he repudiated outright Quinet's humanitarianism, he never ceased attempting to reconcile Ballanche with orthodoxy.¹⁰⁹

Besides Laprade, the members of the *école* were Martial Guillemon, Justin Maurice, Barthélemy Tisseur, Adolph Blanc de Saint-Bonnet, and André Pezzani. Affiliated with this core were Jean-Jacques Ampère, Frédéric Ozanam, and the comtesse d'Hautefeuille. We have already mentioned Guillemon and Maurice. Barthélemy Tisseur, the eldest of five literary Tisseur brothers, was a poet who taught French literature at the University of Neuchâtel in Switzerland.¹¹⁰ Adolph

¹⁰⁹ Hunt, *The Epic in Nineteenth-Century France*, 240, 243, 249.

¹¹⁰ Ballanche, *La Ville des Expiations*, éd. Rastoul, lxxxvi.

Blanc de Saint-Bonnet (1815–1880) had been exposed to Ballanche's thought as a youth in Lyon by his teacher Joseph Noiret, another disciple of Ballanche. The book that marked his arrival on the French philosophical scene, however, *De l'unité spirituelle ou de la société et de son but au delà de temps* (1841), was inspired above all by Quinet. The three-volume work was a great success, winning praise from Victor Cousin and Félix Ravaisson, and from Salvandy, the Ministre de l'Instruction publique, the Croix de la Légion d'honneur. Shortly thereafter, however, in the face of a series of personal misfortunes Blanc de Saint-Bonnet withdrew to his family estate, where he passed several years in seclusion meditating on the problem of suffering. The literary result, *Le Douleur* (1848), draws heavily on Ballanche's theory of expiation while attempting to reconcile Ballanche's thought with Catholic orthodoxy. Like his friend Laprade, Blanc de Saint-Bonnet became more and more orthodox as he grew older; his last works bear no trace of the religious and political audacity of Quinet that had inspired his first work.¹¹¹

André Pezzani, a Lyon lawyer whose epic poem, *Falkir, ou les Mystères du Siècle* (1847), ends with the couplet: "Trois mots donnent la clé de la création, / *Epreuve, advancement, initiation*",¹¹² pushed Ballanche's thought in a direction reminiscent of Jean Reynaud. Pezzani's summary of Ballanche's thought, *Esquisse de la philosophie de Ballanche* (1850), emphasizes the heterodox speculations of *Palingénésie sociale* on the pre-existence of souls. In his own philosophical works, from *Exposé d'un nouveau système philosophique* (1843) to *Les Druides, synthèse philosophique* (1865), Pezzani elaborated Ballanche's ideas into a theory of a plurality of existences and worlds within a cosmic system of expiation and perfectibility. In the end, he largely abandoned Catholicism altogether.¹¹³ For the members of the *école lyonnaise*, as doubtless for many other young people in the 1830s and 1840s, Ballanche's philosophy of history functioned as a portage between Catholic orthodoxy and heterodox speculation, regardless of which direction the voyageur was travelling.

A word should be said about the Lyonnais painter Paul Chenavard (1807–1895) and his plans for the decoration of the Panthéon inasmuch as Chenavard is often cited as a member of the *école lyonnaise*.

¹¹¹ Joseph Buche, *Blanc de Saint-Bonnet: Le Philosophe de la Douleur* (Trévoux: Jeannin, 1904 [Extrait de la *Bulletin de la Société littéraire, historique, et archéologique de Lyon*]), 7–12, 21; Bowman, *Christ des Barricades*, 342–344.

¹¹² Hunt, *The Epic in Nineteenth-Century France*, 223.

¹¹³ Frainet, *Essai sur la philosophie de P.-S. Ballanche*, 265–267; Ballanche, *La Ville des Expiations*, éd. Rastoul, lxxxvi.

Immediately after the Revolution of 1848 Chenavard was commissioned by A. A. Ledru-Rollin, Ministre de l'Intérieur in the provisional government, to execute a series of murals for the Panthéon in celebration of the birth of the Second Republic. Chenavard sketched a vast cycle of sixty paintings depicting crucial moments in the history of humanity from the Flood to the exile of Napoleon. He entitled his cycle, which constituted nothing less than a philosophy of history, "Palingénésie Sociale". The title obviously derives from Ballanche; but, while Chenavard admired his fellow Lyonnais and followed his ideas on some counts, Chenavard's philosophy of history differs from Ballanche's in important respects, above all in being far more pessimistic. History, in Chenavard's vision, follows a cyclical pattern of maturation and decay in which destruction is followed by rebirth, and the whole, finally pointless, sequence begins ever anew. In effect, Chenavard fused the Stoic sense of palingenesis as periodic destruction of the world by fire with Ballanche's social palingenesis.¹¹⁴ The mature Chenavard belongs not, despite his friendship with them, among Laprade and the Catholic members of the *école lyonnais* but among the *cénacle* whose leader was the poet Louis Ménard and which congregated in mid-1850s in the salon of the comtesse d'Agoult. Calling themselves "the Pagans", this group, under the influence of Benjamin Constant and Quinet, pushed Ballanche's social palingenesis into a humanitarianism which fused democratic politics with polytheistic, syncretic religiosity.¹¹⁵ Chenavard completed all the sketches and most of the cartoons for his cycle of murals but was never allowed to work on the Panthéon. He lost his political sponsors in the overthrow of the Second Republic and was unable to defend his plans against those, led by the Archbishop of Paris, who denounced them as "*humanitaires*", anti-Christian, politically destabilizing, and morally reprehensible. On the morrow of Louis Napoleon's coup d'état, the Panthéon, its walls remaining bare, became once again the Church of Sainte-Geneviève.¹¹⁶

¹¹⁴ Marie-Antoinette Grunewald, *Paul Chenavard et la décoration du Panthéon de Paris en 1848* (Lyon: Musée des Beaux-Arts, 1977), 1–9.

¹¹⁵ Hunt, *The Epic in Nineteenth-Century France*, 259–260.

¹¹⁶ Grunewald, *Paul Chenavard et la décoration du Panthéon*, 10–11. Most of Chenavard's sketches and cartoons for the Panthéon are in the collection of the Musée des Beaux-Arts in Lyon. Many are reproduced in Grunewald; see also Joseph Sloane, *Paul Marc Chenavard: Artist of 1848* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1962).

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

THE THEODICY OF HISTORY

Ballanche's never robust health deteriorated further from the late 1830s. Stomach problems forced him to give up eating first meat, then everything except soup, milk, and vegetables in what he called his "Pythagorean diet"; and he suffered from insomnia. Two deaths in the summer of 1836 hit him particularly hard: Andre-Marie Ampère's in June and his sister's in July. From 1840 Ballanche was no longer able to accompany Récamier on her annual summer peregrinations from spa to spa. This separation from Juliette was the hardest consequence of his ill health for him to bear. The comtesse d'Hautefeuille, at whose château Ballanche passed these summers of desolation, did her best—terribly inadequate though she knew it to be—to compensate for her absence. Ballanche's health permitted him to work only in fits and starts; nevertheless, he wanted to complete one more project: a comprehensive synthesis of his works as the definitive statement of his thought.

A final synthesis

Sometime in the early 1830s Ballanche had discarded the idea of continuing the sequence of his *Palingénésie sociale* as outlined in the 1829 Prospectus for a nine volume *Oeuvres* in favour of a comprehensive synthesis of his thought. Around 1835 he decided to use the largely complete, but now superseded, *Ville des Expiations* as the framework for this definitive work and set about revising it.

Cette pauvre *Ville des Expiations*, je l'arrache de ses vieux fondements, je dis vieux, car à l'heure qu'il est, il y près de vingt ans qu'elle a été faite une première fois. Je l'arrache donc de ses vieux fondements pour la soulever tout entière et la placer dans une sphère plus élevée.¹

¹ Ballanche to Hautefeuille, 2 June 1835, in Alfred Marquiset, *Ballanche et Mme. d'Hautefeuille. Lettres inédites* (Paris: Champion, 1912), 48.

In light of his new project Ballanche looked back on his published works with a certain ambivalence:

Depuis quelques temps, je suis occupé d'une revision générale de mes ouvrages. Les éditions actuelles seront, en quelque sort, comme non avenues. Je ne les détruirai pas, parce que je ne veux ni dois les détruire. Il y aura, d'ailleurs, peut-être, des personnes qui tiendront à la forme ancienne. Je ne retirerai donc rien de la circulation, mais lorsqu'on s'adresse directement à moi, je me crois obligé d'annoncer mon projet. Ce qui m'interdit la faculté de dire en public, c'est que je ne puis pas prévoir encore le moment où ce travail de révision, qui sera très considérable, pourra être prêt. . . . Je crois que le moment est venu de faire un dernier travail qui met tous mes ouvrages dans leur état définitif.²

Nevertheless, Ballanche's new project in no way represents a renunciation of the ideas of *Palingénésie sociale*; it may be largely attributed to his constant unease with the form of his works.

Before long Ballanche decided that his comprehensive synthesis could be achieved by incorporating into the framework of the existing *Ville des Expiations* his most important books, unpublished manuscripts, and yet-to-be-written works, each linked to the others by new commentaries. A letter of 1836 indicates which of his published works Ballanche intended to include in the expanded *Ville des Expiations*:

J'introduirai, dans la *Ville des Expiations*, *Orphée*, *Antigone*, les *Sécessions romaines*, la *Vision d'Hébal*, l'*Homme sans nom*, etc. Mais je laisserai en dehors l'*Essai sur les Institutions*, les *Prolegomènes de la Palingénésie*, le *Viellard et le Jeune homme*, etc. J'aurai trente-trois livres. Chaque livre sera toujours précédé de deux arguments, pour la liaison et l'ensemble. Mais ces arguments seront complètement nouvelles.³

A draft of a table of contents in manuscript, headed "la Cité mystique" and dated by Rastoul ca. 1836,⁴ indicates more precisely which works Ballanche intended to comprise his thirty-three books:

- 1 *Ville des Expiations* (Book I)
- 2–10 *Orphée*
- 11 *Ville des Expiations* (Book II)

² Ballanche to Beuchot, 3 February 1835, in BN, MS n.a.f. 5197, feuillet 253. Bénichou, Dédéyan, and Roos, following Frainnet, erroneously date this letter 3 February 1837.

³ Ballanche to Hautefeuille, 15 October 1836, in Marquiset, *Ballanche et Mme. d'Hautefeuille*, 71.

⁴ Ballanche, *La Ville des Expiations*, éd. Rastoul (Paris: Editions des Presses françaises, 1926), lxxii. The heading *La Ville des Expiations* has been crossed out and replaced by the paraphrase, *la Cité mystique*.

- 12–17 *Antigone*
- 18 *Ville des Expiations* (Book III)
- 19–21 *Formule générale*
- 22 *Ville des Expiations* (Book IV)
- 23–24 *Homme sans nom*
- 25 *Élégie*
- 26 *Vision d'Hébal* (Book V [formerly VIII] of *Ville des Expiations*)
- 27 *Zénobie*
- 28 *Recueil catholique*
- 29 *La Révolution française mise au rang d'une phase cosmogonique*
- 30 *Comparation des systèmes et des idées*
- 31–33 *Comparation des hommes et Appendice*

The works listed from one to twenty-six are known (*Élégie* is the unwritten volume of *Palingénésie sociale*, not the *pièce de circonstance* of 1820). Ballanche had been planning since at least the late 1820s to write an epic of the first years of Christianity around the figure of Zénobie, a third-century Queen of Palmyra.⁵ In fact, Book VII of *Ville des Expiations* sketches, as an example of the poetic drama taught by the college of theosophs, the outline of a trilogy on Zénobie, in which the course of the Queen's life is an allegory of the progressive initiation of the human race.

There are no drafts entitled either *Recueil catholique* or *La Révolution française mise au rang d'une phase cosmogonique* among Ballanche's manuscripts. Ballanche's intentions for the *Recueil catholique* may relate to his discussion of the meaning of "catholique" in a manuscript headed "Sur le point de vue catholique de l'encyclopédie". Ballanche began to think about the nature of encyclopedias as the result of a request in the spring of 1836 to write an introduction to a proposed new encyclopedia:

On est venu me proposer de faire l'introduction à une des Encyclopédies qui se commettent à présent. J'ai d'abord refusé. On a insisté. J'ai dit que j'examinerais. J'ai examiné. J'ai promis parce qu'une idée m'est survenue. Le véritable travail serait une classification des sciences, une généalogie historique des connaissances humaines. Ce travail n'était pas à ma mesure; puis je me suis persuadé avec raison, je crois, que le moment n'est pas encore venu d'une véritable encyclopédie. Alors je me suis dit qu'il fallait non pas jalonner la route, mais marquer le point de départ. Je me suis rappelé le mot *Dieu*, le mot *esprit* qui implique le mot *matière*. Depuis ce jour, je laisse mon discours se faire dans ma

⁵ Ballanche to Amélie Lenormant, 18 June 1829, in Amélie-Cyvoct Lenormant, ed., *Mme. Récarnier, les amis de sa jeunesse et sa correspondance intime* (Paris: Lévy, 1872), 195.

tête. Il doit être une réponse à cette triple question: Qu'est-ce que Dieu? Qu'est-ce que l'esprit? Qu'est-ce que la matière? Je me place donc avant l'homme. Je m'explique mal; je ne réponds point à la question, je la pose. Ce devrait être à l'Encyclopédie à répondre si elle se trouvait en état de répondre. Et l'homme ne survient que pour balbutier une réponse à la triple question. Et cette réponse est successive. Chaque siècle fait la sienne. Et voilà la science successive. Et voilà l'histoire des temps et des lieux. L'humanité elle-même est une réponse à la triple question. Et cette réponse est toujours successive. Lorsqu'elle sera complète, le rôle actuel de l'humanité sera fini. Elle saura.⁶

A few weeks later the posthumous publication of Joseph de Maistre's book on the philosophy of Francis Bacon moved Ballanche to reflect on his Encyclopedia idea: "L'Encyclopédie du siècle dernier acceptait la philosophie expérimentale de Bacon. Je ne pouvais pas l'accepter. L'Encyclopédie du siècle dernier prenait son point de départ dans la sensation; je prends le mien dans l'idée, etc. etc."⁷

The idea of a new Encyclopedia, synthetic where Diderot's was analytic, was very much in the air in the mid-1830s. Hoëne-Wronski, as Ballanche must have known, was one of the pioneers of the idea. Based on his conception of the law of creation that was the philosophical foundation for his project of a universal reform in the sciences, Wronski proposed an organic system of sciences, deduced from one principle, governed by one universal law, and integrating different branches of science in an "absolute system of the world".⁸ Ballanche's manuscript begins, echoing his letter to Hautefeuille, by declaring that encyclopedias classify the thought of a given era. It then goes on to propose his own conception of "catholic", rather than Wronski's Messianic Absolutism, as the synthesizing idea that must govern any new encyclopedia if it is to be commensurate with the needs of the current age. The following paragraph summarizes his argument.

The eucharistic dogma of the real presence, according to which the victim has been immolated since the beginning, is a cosmogonic law, i.e., one of the laws by virtue of which the world exists. All sacrifices in other religions are prophecies and emblems of it. The Eucharist is the mystical and living image of the perpetual dogma of

⁶ Ballanche to Hautefeuille, 14 April 1836, in Marquiset, *Ballanche et Mme. d'Hautefeuille*, 63–64.

⁷ Ballanche to Hautefeuille, 7 June 1836, in Marquiset, *Ballanche et Mme. d'Hautefeuille*, 65.

⁸ Andrzej Walicki, *Philosophy and Romantic Nationalism: The Case of Poland* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1982), 115.

the transformation of humanity through social evolution. It contains the dogmas of the Fall, of rehabilitation, and of mediation that alone explain humanity. Without these doctrines, no philosophy of history is possible because a philosophy of history cannot be anything other than an exposition of the nature of humanity. From the fact that the real presence is the Christian dogma par excellence, it follows that the Church, which alone admits this perpetual dogma of love, is incontestably the depositary of the Christian tradition, the universal Church, and alone has the right to call itself Catholic. "Catholic", however, must be understood in its most general, most absolute sense; that is, in its radical sense of "universal", without the restrictive modifier "Roman". While the orthodox notion of Catholic played an important role in the past, particularly as a bulwark against the schisms and heresies of the Middle Ages and the impieties of the eighteenth century, it must now unite with the general traditions of humanity from which it emerged. All pretention to exclusivity ought to disappear in the continuing evolution of Christianity. This synthetic notion of "catholic", at once primitive and definitive, is still in a state of development within the Christian community, and it will remain in a developmental stage until the Church itself experiences a change of heart because only the Church, the perpetual depositary of the faith and infallible regulatrix of belief, is capable of producing the evolution of Catholicism. The cosmogonic doctrines govern the moral world, and since the moral world includes the intellectual world, which in turn includes the laws of the material world, the intellectual world and the laws of the material world are also governed by the cosmogonic doctrines. From this it follows that, in its most absolute sense, any Encyclopedia can receive its unity only from the synthetic notion of "Catholic". The *Encyclopédie* of the eighteenth century was purely empirical, anti-traditional, and consequently anti-historic. A new synthetic Encyclopedia ought to strip off successively all antagonisms, all antinomies, all pretention to exclusivity. In abolishing all analysis in the progressive return of synthesis, a "Catholic" encyclopedia would provide the immutable, eternal element on which the poetry, science, art, history, philosophy of the new age must be based.⁹

In identifying the dogma of the real presence with his own palin-genetic theory, Ballanche establishes himself, not Rome, as the voice

⁹ Ballanche, "Sur le point de vue catholique de l'encyclopédie" in BML MSS 1806-1810, Dossier 19.

of true Catholicism. Ballanche may have intended in the *Recueil catholique* to sketch the coming synthesis between Catholicism and the universal traditions in the continuing evolution of historical Christianity as the foundation for the intellectual life of the new age.

The phrase “*la Révolution française mise au rang d’une phase cosmogonique*” appears in one of the excerpts from the *Ville des Expiations* published in *La France Littéraire*: “La révolution française, crise immense, prend, si l’on peut parler ainsi, rang parmi les crises cosmogoniques du monde civil”.¹⁰ In a manuscript draft of a prologue for the revised edition of his works (of which more below), Ballanche emphasizes the palingnetic significance of the Revolution by equating it with the advent of Christianity: “Comparez le berceau du christianisme avec celui de la Révolution.”¹¹ The manuscript outlines the history of the Revolution and its aftermath, up to and including the July Revolution, as seven cosmogonic days. The cosmogonic function of Christianity was to inaugurate the plebeian age; the Revolution inaugurates the final stage, or the culmination, of the plebeian age. Hence, the Revolution ranks as a cosmogonic phase in the social evolution of humanity. Though the phrase is new, the idea it expresses is not. From *Institutions sociales* on, Ballanche has granted the Revolution positive epochal significance as the palingnetic crisis formative of the new social order that is in the process of replacing the *ancien régime* as humanity progresses toward its rehabilitation.

Manuscript drafts of unpublished sections of *Ville des Expiations* contain, as we have seen in relation to the Saint-Simonians and Lamennais, a few fragments of what was to have been a chapter in which prominent rulers and politicians, philosophers, and religious figures of Ballanche’s day are tried before the *conseil ésotérique* in order to determine the extent to which they furthered or hindered social evolution. In another fragment Ballanche himself appears before the tribunal and is found guilty of “not co-ordinating his material and of not expressing himself with sufficient clarity!”¹² It is probable that Ballanche intended to extend these judgement fragments into a *Comparation des systèmes et des idées* and *Comparation des hommes*.

By 1840 Ballanche was speaking of his comprehensive synthesis under the title of *La Théodicée de l’histoire*. The first mention of the new

¹⁰ Ballanche, “Palingénésie sociale. Epilogue” in *La France Littéraire* 1 (1832): 242.

¹¹ Ballanche, “Hébal. Théodicée de l’histoire. Prologue général” in BML, MSS 1806–1810, Dossier 11.

¹² A. J. L. Busst, “An Unpublished Letter from Ballanche to Lamennais” in *The Modern Language Review* 63 (1968): 368.

title occurs in a letter to Récamier dated 21 August 1840.¹³ Over the following months and years the title reappears every so often as Ballanche notes that his health either prevents or permits him to work at his labour of revision.¹⁴ Ballanche evidently discussed his progress on *La Théodicée de l'histoire* with various persons since Louis de Loménie's 1841 study of Ballanche concludes with the observation that he will soon publish, as his final word, a theodicy of history.¹⁵ Charles Dédéyan has argued that the change in title dates from 1837, on the grounds that Ballanche used the phrase "le temps est venu de remplacer la philosophie de l'histoire par la théodicée de l'histoire" in his letter to Beuchot, quoted above, announcing his decision to revise his works. Dédéyan's dating is dubious; the letter to Beuchot contains no such phrase, and a printed draft of the "Dédicace", which Dédéyan also dates to 1837, bears the inscription, in Ballanche's hand, "1re d'Auteur = 21 mai 1840".¹⁶ Paul Bénichou and Oscar Haac agree that the change of title dates from ca. 1840.¹⁷

The question of date settled, we may turn to a more important question: does the change of title signal a change in intent, or at least emphasis? On the basis of the "Dédicace" and "Prologue général" to *La Théodicée de l'histoire*,¹⁸ Bénichou suggests that Ballanche replaced "*Palingénésie sociale*" with "*Théodicée de l'histoire*" in order to relate his social theory more expressly to God, rather than simply evoking the law of social metamorphosis. Haac similarly concludes that the new title represents a shift in emphasis toward the mystical aspect of palingenesis.¹⁹ Do the texts themselves support this interpretation?

¹³ Ballanche to Récamier, 21 August 1840, in Agnès Kettler, *Lettres de Ballanche à Madame Récamier, 1812-1845* (Paris: Champion, 1996), 686. Its first appearance in the correspondence with Hautefeuille is 21 September 1840, though Ballanche's letters for the first months of 1840 are missing.

¹⁴ For example, Ballanche to Hautefeuille in Marquiset, *Ballanche et Mme. d'Hautefeuille*, 169, 177, 179, 187, 194, 202.

¹⁵ Louis de Loménie, "M. Ballanche" in *Galerie des Contemporains illustrés*, 10 vols. (Paris: René, 1840-1847), 2:53.

¹⁶ Ballanche, "Hébal. Théodicée de l'histoire". Dédicace" in BML MSS 1806-1810, Dossier 11. The inscription appears at the top of page nine.

¹⁷ Paul Bénichou, "Le Grand oeuvre de Ballanche: Chronologie et inachèvement" in *Revue d'histoire littéraire de la France* 75 (1975): 745; Ballanche, *La Théodicée et la Virginie romaine*, éd. Oscar A. Haac (Genève: Droz, 1959), 39.

¹⁸ Both in BML MSS 1806-1810, Dossier 11. Dédéyan has published the Dédicace as "La Dédicace de la *Palingénésie sociale* de Ballanche" in *Les Lettres Romanes* 7 (1953): 223-236. Haac summarizes both the Dédicace and Prologue in Ballanche, *La Théodicée et la Virginie romaine*, éd. Haac, 39-55.

¹⁹ Bénichou, "Le Grand oeuvre de Ballanche", 745-746; Ballanche, *La Théodicée et la Virginie romaine*, éd. Haac, 16.

The first section of the “Dédicace”, which comprises roughly two-thirds of the whole, reproduces, with some additions, the text of the “Dédicace” to *Palingénésie sociale* published in the 1830 *Oeuvres*. The final third, under the heading “Hébal est le pèlerin de l’humanité”, closely parallels the *Vision d’Hébal*. Here, as in the 1831 version, the pilgrim Hébal experiences a mystical vision in which he witnesses the sweep of human history. He successively represents the initiators of *Orphée*, assists at the secessions of the Roman plebeians, witnesses the Christian age up through contemporary times, and finishes at the gates of the Ville des Expiations: “Et le pèlerin de l’humanité, après avoir été successivement l’homme proto ancien, l’homme ancien, devenu enfin l’homme moderne, c’est à dire complet, se trouve, après quelques autres épreuves, en état de visiter la ville des Expiations”.²⁰ The last lines of the “Dédicace” place Hébal before the final mystery:

Hébal, terminera-t-il sa vie symbolique par une dernière transformation au sein de l’Extase? Hélas!, il ne sait encore si le nuage qui lui cache l’avenir, qui voile de lointains et nouveaux horizons à tous les yeux, perdra de sa cruelle opacité. Quant à présent, il ne sait qu’une chose c’est que le temps est venu de remplacer la philosophie de l’histoire par la théodicée de l’histoire.²¹

Ballanche echoes the concluding line of the “Dédicace” in a note added to the end of one of the manuscript drafts of the “Prologue général”: “Tous mes efforts ne tendent qu’à un but, celui de substituer une *théodicée de l’histoire* à ce qu’on appelle la *philosophie de l’histoire*”.²² While these lines account for Bénichou and Haac’s judgement, they are, in fact, red herrings. There is no shift from a philosophy of history to a theodicy of history because the philosophy of history of *Palingénésie sociale* has always been a theodicy of history. *Palingénésie sociale* is built on the premise that to understand history is to know that it is predicated on the cosmogonic moments of Creation, Fall, and Rehabilitation. In choosing *La Théodicée de l’histoire* as the title of his definitive synthesis, Ballanche merely summed up what he had been doing all along.

Rather than reorient Ballanche’s thought, the “Prologue général”, which in its best draft (nevertheless incomplete) covers forty-four pages,

²⁰ “La Dédicace de la *Palingénésie sociale* de Ballanche”, éd. Dédéyan, 235.

²¹ “La Dédicace de la *Palingénésie sociale* de Ballanche”, éd. Dédéyan, 236.

²² Ballanche, “Hébal. Théodicée de l’histoire. Dédicace”, BML, MSS 1806–1810, Dossier 11.

marshals philosophical and theological arguments in support of Ballanche's philosophy of history. Ballanche constructed the "Prologue général" around an entry, "Dieu", that he wrote for the *Dictionnaire de la conversation et de lecture* in 1835.²³ We have Ballanche's own account of the genesis of this article. The editor, he says, knocked on everyone else's door before reaching his. Nevertheless, having believed for some time that the traditional proofs for the existence of God are in need of a complete renovation, he welcomes the opportunity to set them right, as well as to place his ideas before 45,000 subscribers. Two weeks later, Ballanche confidently predicts that his article will become the point of departure for a new series of proofs of God's existence.²⁴ A few months later, Ballanche notes that he will have to revise the entry when he gets around to incorporating it into the expanded *Ville des Expiations* (as he was then calling his synthesis).²⁵ Ballanche's procedure in "Dieu" is to assert philosophical principles, then draw out the implications of his assertions. The four following paragraphs summarize his argument.

Humanity is necessary because it exists. The universe is necessary because it exists. The only way to explain these necessities is through the idea of God; the human spirit must bow before this ineluctable fact. Since we must affirm that these facts are so but cannot understand how they are so, there is a great void in our comprehension. Human intelligence nevertheless laboriously searches for the unknown laws of the universe, of the *monde phénoménal* and of the *monde de l'intelligence*. In this search the question of causality disappears, appropriately, because such a notion is insufficient to satisfy our intellectual faculties and our moral faculties. If, however, we cannot understand the ineluctable facts of existence, the order and harmony of the universe, which cannot arise by chance, teach us that there are laws behind these facts. And that there is order rather than chance implies love. Being, order and love comprise the idea of God. The single, unique, and sufficient God is power, intelligence, and love.

²³ Ballanche, "Dieu" in *Dictionnaire de la Conversation et de la lecture*. Dictionnaire inventaire raisonné des notions générales les plus indispensables à tous, par un société de savants et de gens de lettres sous la direction de M. W. Duckett, 2^{ème} édition 16 vols. (Paris: Firmin-Didot, 1853-1860 [first edition 68 tomes en 34 vols., Paris: Belin-Mondar, 1832-1851]), 7:577-578.

²⁴ Ballanche to Hautefeuille, 18 June and 2 July 1835, in Marquiset, *Ballanche et Mme. d'Hautefeuille*, 50-51.

²⁵ Ballanche to Hautefeuille, 6 November 1835, in Marquiset, *Ballanche et Mme. d'Hautefeuille*, 58.

The existence of human knowledge implies a primitive revelation placed in human intelligence at its origin. The primitive traditions of the human race, authoritative because unanimous, are our surest knowledge. If the *word* God is found in all languages, it is because the *idea* of God is found in human intelligence. If this idea was acquired, i.e., not primitive, then it would never have detached itself from anthropomorphism; instead, anthropomorphism is a corruption of the primitive idea. That the Hindu mystics assert that Creation is in some way a resurrection or a rehabilitation proves that traces of the primitive revelation remain and that in its origin, as in its end, humanity is one. Genesis, however, is the most complete, most synthetic expression of the perpetual and continuous divine decree. While all merely human knowledge falls before revelation, revelation confirms the primitive traditions about humanity, the universe, and God.

God is the author of laws; humanity is destined to be initiated into knowledge of the laws. From the beginning (to be understood independently of time and space), God manifests his three faculties of power, intelligence, and love. In relation to humanity, divine love can only operate by the gift of conscience, of free will; and thus humanity was created. But it was further necessary that humanity should merit its being; hence, the gift of liberty was an *épreuve* and humanity is responsible for its actions. Present humanity, a duplicitous being tending toward both good and evil, is explained by the Fall. But revelation adds that the Fall was followed immediately by the promise of rehabilitation. And this promise is realized in all phases of human evolution. Thus evil, introduced by human liberty, is attenuated by the effect of the divine decree of rehabilitation. Thus the gift of responsibility was a promotion, and the Fall itself was a promotion because it gave place to a new and more striking manifestation of love. *Felix culpa.*

The idea of God is incomplete without the idea of the production of all things *ex nihilo*. God is absolute existence. God, humanity, and the world form a harmonious whole, not an identical whole. The idea of God is the idea of a unity without confusion of the things that form it; the multiplicity of creation does not compromise God's radical unity. Everything that can possibly exist does exist because the divine power is infinite. Hence, all that is possible exists, and always exists, either in potential or in actuality; hence, the contemporaneity of God, his designs, and his works; hence, eternity is joined to time, infinity to finite space. Eternity and infinity, confounded in

a single conception, are an adequate idea of God. Such an idea is beyond human understanding; we have faith in God, we do not know God. Such a situation is an ordeal for our intelligence; indeed, *l'épreuve par le mystère* is the *épreuve* that humanity is undergoing at present.

The extant drafts of the "Prologue général" add very little of substance to the content of "Dieu". The first line, however, underscores Ballanche's method: "Dieu s'affirme, il ne se prouve pas", and Ballanche later expands the discussion of time, space, and causality by noting that time and space are modes of explaining what is in itself inexplicable, inconceivable even, were it not for an innate faculty of the human spirit, a faculty whose ineffaceable imprint is conserved in all languages, because primitive humanity, fallen humanity, and regenerated humanity are immutably identical.²⁶

Ballanche's allusion to the *monde phénoménal* and the *monde de l'intelligence*, and his identification of the contemporary "épreuve par le mystère" as our inability to understand the realm transcending reason that our reason nevertheless tells us must exist, must be understood in relation to the reception of Kant's "Copernican revolution" in philosophy in early nineteenth-century France. Ballanche and his friends back in Lyon during the Empire embraced Kant as an ally in the spiritualist reaction against the corrosive rationalism of the Enlightenment (Ampère in particular studied Kant, and his influence on Maine de Biran in this respect is important in the history of French philosophy). This, to us surprising, reading of Kant was common in Empire France. The Kant of Ballanche and his friends was the Kant of Charles Villers and Ph. Huldiger (pseud. for Tranchant de Laverne). These popularizers promoted the Kantian philosophy as an anti-materialist refutation of Lockean empiricism and Humean skepticism:

The Kantian philosophy proves victoriously the immateriality (and hence the indestructibility) of the soul, since it demonstrates that matter can provide nothing for the ideas of the reason. . . . From the principle of the existence of the soul is easily deduced that of freedom, as from the necessity in which the reason finds itself to discover an absolute cause which links together in an absolute whole the diverse parts of this vast universe, is deduced the idea of God. By these very principles, this new philosophy destroys materialism forever.²⁷

²⁶ Ballanche, "Hébal. Théodicée de l'histoire. Prologue général" in BML, MSS 1806-1810, Dossier 11.

²⁷ Huldiger in *Le Conservateur* 2 (an V). Quoted and translated in George Boas, *French Philosophies of the Romantic Period* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1925), 172.

This is how Ballanche understood Kant in *Du Sentiment*.²⁸ In later years, Ballanche knew Kant via Joseph-Marie Degérando and Victor Cousin, but also via Fabre d'Olivet and Hoëne-Wronski. It is these latter two that are most important for “Dieu” and the “Prologue général”. While Villers and Huldiger praised the Kantian philosophy for its anti-materialism, Kant’s German continuators criticized his acceptance of an epistemological disjunction between the phenomenal and noumenal worlds, which they sought to overcome in philosophies of the Absolute that permitted direct contact with ultimate truth. J. G. Fichte and the early Schelling are the best known representatives of post-Kantian Absolutist philosophy, but in France Wronski created his own philosophy of the Absolute, while Fabre d'Olivet sought to overcome the same epistemological disjunction theosophically.

Wronski accepts Kant’s Copernican revolution in philosophy, by which the mind does not have to conform to its objects but the objects have to conform to the mind, but accuses Kant of lessening its significance by identifying the *a priori* forms of knowledge with the subjective forms of human mind. The *a priori* principles, he asserts, are “the laws of eternal truth”; they are objective, because the laws of reason are identical with the laws of the universe. Thus the problem of unknowable “things in themselves” disappears and the idea of an unbridged gulf between the phenomenal and the noumenal worlds is replaced by a conviction that an *a priori* knowledge of the noumenal reality is possible. Kant himself, in spite of his phenomenalism, assumed that humanity feels an irresistible metaphysical need to strive for the Absolute. For Kant, however, the Absolute was merely a *regulative idea*, having no “objective” existence. Wronski disagrees, and makes the Absolute the starting point of his philosophy. Wronski’s philosophy therefore depends on the possibility of a “genetic intuition” of the Absolute from which all reality can be deduced in the same way as (according to Kant) the whole of mathematics can be derived from the pure intuitions of time and space as categorically determined. Kant, according to Wronski, rejected this possibility because he was convinced of the fundamental heterogeneity between being and knowledge. Hence, Kant split rationality into the phenomenal and the noumenal worlds, and the Kantian theoretical reason had to face

²⁸ Boas links Ballanche’s definition of “*sentiment*” to Huldiger’s translation of Kant’s “Theory of Pure Moral Religion”. Boas, *French Philosophies of the Romantic Period*, 172–173.

insoluble antinomies (which Wronski saw as antinomies between Being and Knowledge). Wronski believes the heterogeneity of the cognitive faculties can be overcome.²⁹

Kant himself speaks in the *Critique of Judgement* about "an archetypal intellect" that unites intuition and conceptual knowledge, thereby overcoming the heterogeneity of Being and Knowledge. For Kant, however, such an epistemological Absolute was merely a "limiting concept", i.e., something of which we are bound to think but which is completely inaccessible to us. At this point, Wronski sharply differs from Kant: he is convinced that the highest knowledge, transcending all dualities, became accessible to him, that it enabled him to penetrate the inner "ineffable" essence of the Absolute. On the one hand, Wronski acknowledges that his system originated in a flash of *intuition*, in an act of illumination; on the other, he insists on the necessity of a total rationalization of knowledge and identifies the Absolute with creative *reason*. From his point of view there is no contradiction in this, because he makes a crucial distinction between the "chrematic" reason (from the Greek word *chrema*, "thing") and the "achrematic" reason. The former is closed in the sphere of finite things; the latter attains to the Infinite. Despite its intuitive nature, Wronski insists that the achrematic reason is a rational faculty, having nothing to do with mysticism. The active, creative spontaneity of reason, as he sees it, is the opposite of mysticism, which is a passive, thoughtless striving for an irrational union with the Absolute. Having defined the conditions of existence as the laws of reason inherent in the inner structure of knowledge, Wronski clearly implies that being is itself rational. This implies, in turn, that our knowledge should be systematized, enclosed in clear-cut intellectual schemata, expressed in mathematical formulae, and so on (cf. Wronski's proposal for a "New Encyclopedia").

Fabre d'Olivet discusses Kant in *Les Vers dorés de Pythagore* (1813). Like Wronski, he cannot tolerate Kantian epistemological dualism. Fabre bases his critique of Kant on a distinction between rationality and reason. Rationality is a secondary faculty that corresponds to the middle term of the triple nature of humanity (body, soul, and spirit); reason, or intellectuality, is a principal faculty that corresponds to the highest term of the triple nature of humanity. The difference is etymologically grounded in the Latin distinction between *ratio* and

²⁹ This paragraph and the one that follows are an abridgement, for the most part word for word, of Walicki, *Philosophy and Romantic Nationalism*, 111–113.

intellectus (cf. Aquinas). Kant misled himself because, confusing *ratio* with *intellectus*, rationality with intellectuality, he misunderstood the nature of reason. The result of Kant's error is a philosophy that first strips humanity of its spiritual faculties, then attempts to grasp spiritual truths with a faculty incommensurate with them, and finally, its attempt having necessarily failed, declares the spiritual truths unknowable to humanity. Kant's error, Fabre argues (inverting Villers and Huldiger), binds humanity to matter instead of raising it into the spiritual realm. The Kantian philosophy falls because it falsely eliminates all the great questions, the content of all true philosophy, about the existence of God, the immortality of the soul, the origin of the universe, and everything that pertains to theosophy.³⁰

Despite Wronski's intolerance of mysticism, Fabre and Wronski share the goal of overcoming Kant's epistemological dualism by means of an intuitive grasp of the Absolute. Moreover, they both accomplish their goal by redefining reason as a faculty capable of grasping the Absolute. Wronski's chrematic and achrematic reason correspond to Fabre's rationality and intellectuality. We see here another homology between German romantic philosophy and Illuminism resulting from, and indicative of, their common descent from the Boehmist tradition.

Ballanche, like Wronski and Fabre, overcomes Kantian epistemological dualism by denying the heterogeneity of Being and Knowledge. His equivalent of Wronski's direct intuition of the Absolute and Fabre's theosophical illumination is the mystic vision of *Vision d'Hébal* that sees into the reality of things.³¹ But such direct vision foreshadows the end of history, when rehabilitated humanity is restored to its primitive status, whereas rehabilitation must be worked out in history. Here, as so often in Ballanche's thought, there is tension between the anticipation of the end of history and the recognition that humanity is still working through the historical process. The historicization of Illuminist reintegration in Ballanche's historiosophy renounces direct apprehension of reality. This does not mean that Ballanche accepts the Kantian dualism, but rather that it must be overcome in a manner commensurate with the capacities of post-lapsarian humanity:

³⁰ Fabre d'Olivet, *Les Vers dorés de Pythagore* (Paris: l'Age d'homme, 1978 [1813]), 304–318.

³¹ See Ballanche, *La Théodicée et la Virginie romaine*, éd. Haac, 51.

Le temps et l'espace, limites de l'éternité et de l'immensité, sont donc de simple idées relatives, des modes d'expliquer ce qui, de soi, est impossible à concevoir, ce qui demeurerait à jamais inexpliqué, si ce n'était pas le résultat d'un faculté innée de l'esprit humain, faculté dont tout le langage conserve l'ineffaçable empreinte, car, nous ne saurions trop le répéter, l'homme primitif, l'homme déchu, l'homme régénéré sont immuablement identique.³²

Though the innate faculty that permitted primitive humanity, and will again permit rehabilitated humanity, direct apprehension of reality was masked in the Fall, knowledge of reality remains accessible through the mediation of primitive revelation, preserved and transmitted in language and the general traditions. Primitive revelation, in fact, constitutes a simulacrum of the once and future direct apprehension. Rather than overcome the Kantian dualism through direct illumination of one sort or another, as Wronski and Fabre d'Olivet do, Ballanche, like the Catholic Traditionalists, overcomes it mediately through primitive revelation. We should not, then, be surprised that the philosophical arguments Ballanche puts forth in "Dieu" and the "Prologue général" to buttress the philosophy of history of *Palingénésie sociale* are the Traditionalist doctrines of existential ontology, primitive revelation, language, and the general traditions, nor that the dense argumentation of these texts resembles nothing so much as Bonald's *Législation primitive*. That Ballanche at this late date should return for philosophical support to the Catholic Traditionalism that was his first intellectual allegiance, despite the progressivism of *Palingénésie sociale* and the alliances of the *parti social*, underscores both the deeply religious nature and the fundamental conservatism of his thought: an invisible chain binds humanity, in both its past and its future, to the throne of mystery.

Last years

Two ongoing quests for glory dominated Ballanche's later years: scientific glory by the invention of a new kind of motor, and literary glory by election to the Académie française.

Récamier had begun campaigning for the election of Ballanche to the Académie française in 1830, shortly after the publication of his

³² Ballanche, "Hébal. Théodicée de l'histoire. Prologue général" in BML MSS 1806-1810, Dossier 11.

Oeuvres. When a seat became vacant late in 1834, she felt that it was time for her friend to put himself forward as a candidate. Ballanche agreed to submit his name, but did not expect to be successful on his first attempt.³³ Eugène Scribe was elected. Another opportunity arose in January 1835 on the death of F.-A. Parseval-Grandmaison. On the first ballot Ballanche received seven votes, by the eighth vote he was down to one (that of Chateaubriand). But since neither of Ballanche's opponents, Lucien Arnault and N. A. Salvandy, had won outright the election was adjourned. Ballanche considered that the Académie was divided into two broad factions: the "old Academy" and the "new Academy". In his view, Arnault was the candidate of the "old Academy" and Salvandy of the "new Academy". The balance between the two factions was very close, so the significance of this election was immense. If Arnault was elected, the old faction would be strengthened and the Académie confirmed in its hostility to the new aesthetic and political ideas. But if Salvandy won, the balance would swing to the side of the "new Academy", thereby paving the way for Ballanche's own admission as well as for others of the new generation, above all Victor Hugo. For this reason, Ballanche felt that Chateaubriand should have ceased to support him when it became obvious that he could not win and thrown his support behind Salvandy.³⁴ Ballanche withdrew his candidacy, and when the election was completed on 19 February 1836 Salvandy was elected. Ballanche's support of Salvandy may have borne unexpected fruit: the latter, on replacing Guizot as Ministre de l'Instruction publique in the Molé cabinet, awarded Ballanche the cross of the Légion d'honneur 1837.

Ballanche was sorely disappointed by his exclusion from the Académie. Although he accepted his friends' explanation that his works were simply too difficult, too opaque for him to have the popular following, even among the "new Academy", necessary for admittance, he firmly believed that he was worthy of the honour and was convinced that his exclusion reflected the shortcomings of the Académie more than of himself.³⁵ In 1839 Ballanche was again under pressure

³³ Ballanche to Hautefeuille, 24 November 1834, in Marquiset, *Ballanche et Mme. d'Hautefeuille*, 35.

³⁴ Ballanche to Hautefeuille, 23 January 1835 and 29 January 1835, in Marquiset, *Ballanche et Mme. d'Hautefeuille*, 38-41.

³⁵ Gaston Frainnet, *Essai sur la Philosophie de Pierre-Simon Ballanche* (Paris: Picard, 1903), 96.

from his friends to declare his candidacy, but he refused to stand. He did not think that his claim on the Académie had improved since 1835 as he had not published any new works and, moreover, he was suspicious of the Academicians' motives: "Voilà dix ans", he wrote to Récamier,

que je n'ai pas acquis de nouveau titre aux suffrages de l'Académie puisque ma dernière publication est de 1830. J'ai parfaitement la conscience qu'aujourd'hui, si l'Académie songe un peu à moi, c'est uniquement pour m'opposer à Victor Hugo. Sans ce motif, il est bien certain que je n'aurais que de très faibles chances. Je ne puis pas accepter une telle situation; je supplie mes amis de ne pas me l'imposer. Il est impossible de laisser Victor Hugo en dehors de l'Académie; ce que l'Académie a de mieux à faire, c'est de surmonter ses susceptibilités. Ce n'est pas à dire, pour cela, que j'aie le projet de me présenter après Victor Hugo. C'est bien fini pour moi. J'ai soixante-trois ans; il ne me reste qu'une chose à faire, c'est de donner la forme définitive à ma pensée et de rentrer dans mon silence. Lorsque ma dernière publication sera faite, je ne vivrai plus que pour mes amis; ma carrière sera complètement close.³⁶

Ballanche was consoled for his disappointment over the Académie by his conviction that scientific fame was imminent. Science had long interested him. As a young man in Lyon he had often discussed questions of mathematics and physics with André-Marie Ampère, and the brilliant successes of his friend made him covet a scientific reputation for himself. His first projects related to the family printing house in Lyon and included a successful new method of melting type.³⁷ On his return trip from Rome in 1813 Ballanche had visited the printer and publisher Giambattista Bodoni at Parma, with whom he hoped to enter into a business relationship.³⁸ Ballanche's literary endeavours, however, left little time for his scientific interests and it was not until the late 1830s that Ballanche returned to them, to the despair of his friends, who feared his experiments would consume what

³⁶ Ballanche to Récamier, undated [October 1839], in Kettler, *Lettres de Ballanche à Madame Récamier*, 659.

³⁷ BML, Fonds Charavay, MS 40 contains two letters from Ballanche to Joseph-Marie Degérando, dated 1813, in which Ballanche tells his friend about his type-setting machine and asks for information about a similar machine invented by Didot. Ballanche worries that Didot is about to market his machine in the Midi and Italy, territories that Ballanche, as a Lyonnais, considers exclusively his.

³⁸ See Leo Neppi Modona, "Lettere di Pierre-Simon Ballanche al Bodoni" in *Rivisti di Letteratura Moderna e Comparata* 16 (1963): 250-253.

was left of his fortune.³⁹ In the end, Juliette Récamier convinced him to hand over to her the remaining twenty thousand francs of his fortune to manage, and for the rest of his life he received an annual allowance of 2,125 francs.⁴⁰ His financial affairs in order, Ballanche concentrated chiefly on the development of a new motor which he envisioned superseding steam as a locomotive power. Dossier 13 of Ballanche's papers at the Bibliothèque Municipale de Lyon contains detailed plans under the heading: *Invention d'un moteur. Système complet de pression de l'air et des liquides appliqués aux locomotives, à la navigation, à l'élévation de l'eau.*

By August of 1839 Ballanche felt that his work on the motor had progressed sufficiently for him to break his accustomed silence regarding his invention. He told Hautefeuille that he had invented a machine whose power to pump water was such that it would win him the competition then being held by the Municipality of Versailles to find away of supplying that city with water in place of the crumbling aqueduct of Marly. Though Ballanche took the precaution of hiring two mathematicians to check his algebraic calculations, he was certain that the underlying physical laws were beyond dispute. All that remained was for him to find a skilled mechanic to help him construct a prototype motor.⁴¹ But finding "un jeune Montgolfier" proved difficult; in July 1840 he reported to Hautefeuille that he was having slight doubts about the success of his motor, although in the same letter he states that he is eager to complete the first motor as a means of generating the enormous funds he needs to build another, more ambitious, machine.⁴² By October 1840 Ballanche had shifted his sights from the Versailles competition; his new plan was to use his machine, which he now called his "*moteur universel*", to propel boats and perhaps even railroad cars. He promises Hautefeuille that the epoch-making maiden launch of his invention will take place in the lake at Saint-Vrain. Once again convinced of the viability of his theories, he gleefully anticipates his imminent election into the Académie des

³⁹ See Amélie Lenormant's remarks in A.-C. Lenormant, *Souvenirs et correspondances tirés des papiers de Madame Récamier*, 2 vols. (Paris: Lévy, 1860), 2:515–516.

⁴⁰ Gisèle Herve, *Pierre-Simon Ballanche* (Nîmes: Lacour, 1990), 149.

⁴¹ Ballanche to Hautefeuille, 15 August and 29 September 1839, in Marquiset, *Ballanche et Mme. d'Hautefeuille*, 144–147.

⁴² Ballanche to Hautefeuille, 25 July 1840, in Marquiset, *Ballanche et Mme. d'Hautefeuille*, 162–163.

sciences ("Alors, l'Académie française ferait ce qu'elle voudrait").⁴³

Ballanche and an assistant worked on the machine for several months. The work progressed slowly, but finally, in August 1841, the motor (once again being used as a water-pump, it seems) was ready to be tested. Ballanche activated the motor; an ominous crack was heard. Stopping the motor, he then reinforced the machine with planks of wood and hoops of iron and tried it again. This time the power of the motor caused it to leap off the ground and smash against the roof of the workshop. The motor was severely damaged and it had not really worked properly, but the power it had evinced in hurling such a heavy machine high into the air convinced Ballanche that he had indeed invented a motor more powerful than a steam engine and that he had only to figure out how to control the enormous energy it generated.⁴⁴

Ballanche never did rebuild his motor, probably owing to a combination of lack of funds and poor health, but he remained convinced that he had invented, in theory at least, something of great importance for the industrial world which others would bring to completion. Ballanche always believed that in the final reckoning his name would be honoured by future generations as much for his scientific discoveries as for his literary works.⁴⁵

Whatever one may think about his "moteur universel", Ballanche does seem to have had some genuine scientific talent. In addition to his successful printing innovations, some of his theoretical speculations were indeed proven to be sound when they were later borne out by inventors more mechanically gifted than himself. He even invented a new sort of cannon, of which a successful prototype was installed at Vincennes. For all his love of metaphysics, one must grant that Ballanche understood the needs of the nascent industrial revolution in France. In his view, his designs for industrial reform and his philosophical writings were complimentary aspects of the same great work of social regeneration. Once again, there is a fascinating parallel with Hoëne-Wronski. In 1843, discussing the first volume of Wronski's *Messianisme* (1842) and alluding to Wronski's *Nouveau système de machine à vapeur* (1835), Ballanche remarks:

⁴³ Ballanche to Hautefeuille, 15 October 1840, in Marquiset, *Ballanche et Madame d'Hautefeuille*, 173–174.

⁴⁴ Ballanche to Hautefeuille, 22 August 1841, in Marquiset, *Ballanche et Madame d'Hautefeuille*, 189–190.

⁴⁵ J.-J. Ampère, *Ballanche* (Paris: René, 1848), 239–240. See also Ballanche to

M. Wronski croit avoir trouvé la loi de création, d'où résulte la solution mathématique des grands problèmes du monde physique, ceux de la mécanique céleste, de la construction mécanique de la terre ou des corps célestes, et de la construction physique et chimique de la terre. C'est qui l'a conduite à résoudre le problème de ce qu'il appelle la locomotion spontanée. M. Wronski ne sait pas que je me suis occupé du même problème sans avoir aucune de ses immense connaissances mathématiques. Je ne crois pas avoir découvert la loi de création, mais je crois être certain de signaler une des lois de création. Cette loi, c'est la solidarité absolue de tous les éléments de la matière. La loi newtonienne n'est que l'expression de cette solidarité universelle. L'attraction et la répulsion sont la pulsation de cette vie universelle de la matière.⁴⁶

Ballanche's "law of the absolute solidarity of all the elements of matter", of which his *moteur universel* was an application, corresponds to the law of social solidarity, according to which the history of humanity is a single history, of which *Palingénésie sociale* is the demonstration. The correspondence of the two laws expresses the unity of the physical and social worlds, and the subordination of both to the spiritual world.

The death of Louis de Bonald in November 1840 once again turned Ballanche's thoughts toward the Académie française. Not only was a seat vacant, but Ballanche felt that he would be a particularly appropriate candidate to succeed the Catholic Traditionalist. Even though his definitive *Théodicée de l'histoire* had still not appeared, Ballanche's position vis-à-vis the Académie had improved considerably since 1835 because several men on whose support he could count had been elected during the intervening years. Initial signs were positive, and Ballanche could even claim the posthumous endorsement of Bonald: "M. de Bonald a plusieurs fois exprimé le désir que j'eusse l'honneur de lui succéder à l'Académie Française".⁴⁷ In the end, however, Ballanche renounced the seat in favour of J.-A. Ancelot, apparently as a gallantry toward Madame Ancelot, who lobbied heavily and shamelessly on behalf of her husband.⁴⁸ In 1842, after the deaths of the comte Lacuée de Cessac and Alexandre Duval vacated two seats

Récamiér, undated [before June 1840], in Kettler, *Lettres de Ballanche à Madame Récamiér*, 662.

⁴⁶ Ballanche to Hautefeuille, 8 October 1843, in Marquiset, *Ballanche et Mme. d'Hautefeuille*, 228–229.

⁴⁷ Ballanche to Victor Cousin, December 1840, in Kettler, *Lettres de Ballanche à Madame Récamiér*, 126.

⁴⁸ For more details, see Kettler, *Lettres de Ballanche à Madame Récamiér*, 127–133.

at the Académie française, Récamier badgered her friend into agreeing to stand once more. Ballanche confided to Hautefeuille that his election seemed to be assured.⁴⁹ This time his confidence was well placed. On 17 February he learned that the Académie had elected Etienne Pasquier and himself. Since Pasquier had received the greater number of votes, he was considered as the replacement for Cessac, whose seat had been the longer vacant, and Ballanche became the successor of Duval.

The Reception of the new Academicians on 28 April 1842 was a society event. Ballanche had told Hautefeuille in February that his election had been popular among Parisian society (once again Récamier's machinations are evident) and many of its members, in addition to the entire Abbaye-aux-Bois circle, attended the Reception. Chateaubriand, in failing health, made his last public appearance on this occasion. Academic custom requires that each new member eulogize his predecessor, after which he is formally welcomed by the Académie. Ballanche's speech (which, on the physically weak Ballanche's request, was read by the historian Auguste Mignet while the new Academician watched happily from his seat) consisted largely of a rehearsal of Duval's life, although Ballanche could not refrain from chastising his predecessor for his steadfast opposition to the new aesthetics. Ballanche was then welcomed on behalf of the Académie by Guillaume de Barante, who spoke sincerely, if somewhat condescendingly. The regret he expressed that the Académie had not received the exposition of Ballanche's system it had sought no doubt conveyed the bewilderment felt by many of the Academicians when faced with Ballanche's theories.⁵⁰

Ballanche had waited so long for the honour of admittance to the Académie that he felt obliged, in spite of the festive atmosphere at the Abbaye-aux-Bois, to feign indifference to it. Amélie Lenormant recalled:

le bon Ballanche assistait à la séance avec le plus admirable sang-froid; et ce jour qui, pour le cercle de l'Abbaye-aux-Bois, était un véritable événement, le laissa dans une parfaite indifférence. . . . Mme. Récamier ne partageait pas son insouciance et jouit vivement de son succès.⁵¹

⁴⁹ Ballanche to Hautefeuille, 5 February 1842, in Marquiset, *Ballanche et Mme. d'Hautefeuille*, 200.

⁵⁰ Alfred Joseph George, *Pierre-Simon Ballanche* (Syracuse: Syracuse UP, 1945), 176–178.

⁵¹ Lenormant, *Souvenirs et correspondances*, 2:514.

But Amélie was not completely taken in by the new Academician's show of modesty.

Ce n'était pas que M. Ballanche, malgré sa candeur et sa simplicité, fût dépourvu d'intérêt pour sa gloire et sans désir de renommée. Il connaissait très-bien sa propre valeur, et la confiance qu'il avait dans le rang que lui assignerait la postérité le laissait fort calme sur le jugements des contemporains. D'ailleurs, ce qu'il mettait bien au-dessus d'un succès littéraire, c'était l'influence morale et philosophique qu'il voulait exercer.⁵²

Recognition by the Académie certainly meant more to Ballanche than he let on, but Amélie Lenormant was right that Ballanche looked to future generations to raise him to the status of an epochal figure and consequently did not place much value on the judgement of his contemporaries, especially, perhaps, that of his fellow Academicians. Indeed, a few months after his reception, Ballanche remarked that the Académie seems inclined to favour the mediocre.⁵³ Further, and perhaps not unrelatedly, Ballanche found that his theories were largely unknown or, if known, misunderstood at the Academy: "J'y suis un véritable zéro".⁵⁴ Ballanche nevertheless derived a great deal of satisfaction from his membership in the Académie and was assiduous in his attendance at Academic functions, even though his poor health prevented him from taken an active role in discussion. Perhaps his most significant contribution was his unflagging campaign to open the Académie to Romantic writers of the younger generation. He was particularly zealous in his support of Alfred de Vigny.

Ballanche's election brought him some increase in public recognition. He was delighted to discover, for example, that Swiss school-children in Neuchâtel were required to learn the *Antigone* by heart.⁵⁵ Closer to home, a learned society devoted one of its meetings to

⁵² Lenormant, *Souvenirs et correspondances*, 2:514.

⁵³ Ballanche to Hautefeuille, 15 May 1842, in Marquiset, *Ballanche et Mme. d'Hautefeuille*, 203.

⁵⁴ Ballanche to Paul David, 4 May 1843, in Edouard Herriot, *Madame Récamier et ses amis*, 2 vols. (Paris: Plon-Nourrit, 1909), 2:359. Paul David was the son of an elder sister of Jacques-Rose Récamier. On meeting his uncle's wife, his elder by a year, he fell deeply in love, but once his initial ardour cooled he became a devoted friend and Récamier entrusted to him much of her correspondence and responsibility for the details of her household economy. See Françoise Wagener, *Madame Récamier, 1777-1849* (Paris: J. C. Lattès, 1986), 52-53.

⁵⁵ Ballanche to Hautefeuille, 4 November 1842, in Marquiset, *Ballanche et Madame d'Hautefeuille*, 210.

Ballanche's interpretation of Roman history on the occasion of the performance of a new play set in that period.

Ce soir j'irai à l'Athénée. Cette séance doit être consacrée à mes idées sur l'histoire romaine, à l'occasion de la tragédie de M. [François] Ponsard [*Lucrèce*, 1843]. Je suis bien convaincu que la tragédie aurait gagné en originalité s'il eût connu mes hypothèses qui, pour moi, ne sont point des hypothèses. . . .⁵⁶

In general, however, Ballanche's election to the Académie occasioned no upsurge in his popularity comparable to that produced by the publication of his *Oeuvres* in 1830. Perhaps the highest tribute had occurred quietly in 1840 when a lodge of freemasons was established that drew its ritual and paraphernalia from *Palingénésie sociale*: "Je suis cité textuellement dans toutes les formules, sous cette expression: *comme dit la tradition*. Ainsi je suis déjà à l'état de tradition, pour un certain nombre de personnes."⁵⁷

Ballanche persevered at his literary projects over the next few years as his health permitted, although aside from his Discourse of Reception to the Académie française in 1842 he published only two minor works in the 1840s. One of these was the article on "Alexandrie" in *Le Correspondant* discussed in Chapter Twelve. The other was an introduction to a book of pious verse by Sébastien de Gayet de Céséna, who wrote under the pseudonym of Sébastien Rhéal. A note from the author thanks Ballanche for the "le don précieux de ce fragment inédit d'une théorie sur l'esthétique, destiné à reprendre sa place dans l'un des poèmes palingénésiques du philosophe chrétien". In fact, Ballanche's introduction consists of passages from four paragraphs previously published in his 1833 article in the *Journal des gens du monde*, which in turn was a fragment of the *Ville des Expiations* (Book VII, sections V, VI, and VII).⁵⁸

Ballanche's health deteriorated further in the mid-1840s and his increasing deafness robbed him of the pleasure of attending meetings of the Académie. Nevertheless, he did not abandon his dream of a definitive edition of his works. In October 1846 he wrote to a publisher

⁵⁶ Ballanche to Paul David, 4 May 1843, in Herriot, *Madame Récamier et ses amis*, 2:359.

⁵⁷ Ballanche to Récamier, 16 August 1840, in Kettler, *Lettres de Ballanche à Madame Récamier*, 684.

⁵⁸ Sébastien Rhéal, *Les Chants du Psalmiste*, précédés d'une Introduction par M. Ballanche (Paris: Delloye, 1840), v–vii. See Ballanche, "Esthétique" in *Journal des gens du monde* 1 (1833): 78.

à propos of a new edition of his works. He listed three objectives: to render his writings accessible to a greater number of readers; to clarify by notes whatever in his work requires elucidation or development; and to place his works in such a relation to each other as to show that they form a unity, “a single book in several volumes”.⁵⁹ He continued to tinker at *La Théodicée de l'histoire*, even though he could manage only an hour or two a day every other day: “je persévère dans mon travail . . . : c'est ce qui fait mon salut dans ces jours de vraie désolation”.⁶⁰

Ballanche's political views hardened in his last years. He had always disliked Guizot, whom he called “Louis-Philippe's Villèle”, and he detested the bellicose Adolphe Thiers. Not least of the joys of being elected to the Académie française was that the Academic honorarium of 1500 livres enabled him to resign his literary pension and thereby free himself from his obligation to Guizot. Ballanche was sympathetic toward all but openly republican enemies of the July Monarchy, although that he had not condemned Louis Napoleon over the 1840 Boulogne debacle owed less to any political convictions than to Ballanche's fond memories of young prince Louis, the son of Récamier's friend, Queen Hortense de Beauharnais, whom he had known in Rome in 1824.⁶¹ The focus of Ballanche's anger at the July Monarchy in the mid-1840s was the struggle between the University and the clergy over the place of religion in French society. The conflict had been simmering since the first days of the regime but became especially intense from 1844 to 1847 when first Villemain then Salvandy, as Ministres de l'Instruction publique, made a series of clumsy legislative attempts to limit the influence of the Church in education. Intermittently, Ballanche was able to convince himself that the passions aroused by the controversy proved that France was still at heart a Catholic society and that one last effort was all that was required to inaugurate the religious renewal he had always anticipated.⁶² But more and more he despaired of society and reflected bitterly on the final triumph of Voltaire:

⁵⁹ “Lettre de Ballanche à une maison d'édition, relative au projet d'une édition définitive de ses oeuvres complètes”, 3 October 1846, BML, Fonds Général, MS 6409/3.

⁶⁰ Ballanche to Hautefeuille, 26 April 1847, in Marquiset, *Ballanche et Madame d'Hautefeuille*, 256.

⁶¹ See Ballanche to Hautefeuille, 30 September and 6 October 1840, in Marquiset, *Ballanche et Madame d'Hautefeuille*, 170–172.

⁶² As, for example, Ballanche to Hautefeuille, 1 January 1844, in Marquiset,

je suis obligé de le reconnaître, en fin de compte, l'Université est voltairienne. La nation officielle, c'est-à-dire la Chambre des députés et les Collèges électoraux sont voltairiens. Voltaire est l'expression de l'esprit français et Voltaire, c'est la dissolution de tout lien de religion, de famille et de toute espèce de moralité.⁶³

In the same letter Ballanche tells Récamier that perhaps it is a good thing that he is no longer able to write the sad pages that the present situation inspire in him.

The last months of Ballanche's life were troubled by the publication of the eight volumes of Lamartine's massively popular *Histoire des Girondins* (1847). In spite of its title, the book primarily reflects the Jacobin ethos, and Robespierre, its dominant character, appears in a favourable light. The work was part of Lamartine's campaign to obtain leadership of the Leftist opposition to Louis-Philippe. Ballanche simply could not permit the *Histoire des Girondins*, which he believed propagated dangerous prejudices, to pass unchallenged. God permitting, he would counteract the distressful effects of Lamartine's work by the publication of a volume of his own, already largely composed in his head, on the Revolution "considérée à mon point de vue".⁶⁴ Ballanche was undoubtedly referring to the ideas he had sketched out under the title "La Révolution française, mise au rang d'un crise cosmogonique". But his qualification was all too prescient; the next day he fell mortally ill.

Juliette Récamier, whose eyesight had been failing for some time, had gone blind in the spring of 1847 and on 3 May she had undergone an operation for cataracts. The operation was declared a success, though it would be several weeks before the convalescent would be permitted to remove the bandages. The anxious Ballanche worried constantly about his friend and visited her every day. In his weak state the daily walk, short as it was, from his lodgings to the Abbaye-aux-Bois proved too much for him; on 4 June he was struck by an inflammation of the chest. On hearing that the doctor had diagnosed the pleurisy as fatal, Récamier, heedless of her doctor's warnings, tore the bandages from her eyes and rushed to his sickbed. In

Ballanche et Madame d'Hautefeuille, 235 and Ballanche to J.-J. Ampère, 12 June 1845, in Lenormant, *Madame Récamier et les amis de sa jeunesse*, 330.

⁶³ Ballanche to Récamier, undated [1 September 1844], in Kettler, *Lettres de Ballanche à Madame Récamier*, 712.

⁶⁴ Ballanche to Hautefeuille, 3 June 1847, in Marquiset, *Ballanche et Madame d'Hautefeuille*, 259.

the week that Ballanche lingered on, Hautefeuille, Jean-Jacques Ampère, and Victor de Laprade alternately relieved Récamier, once again blind, from her vigil at her friend's bedside until, late in the week, the doctor forbade all but Récamier entrance into the sickroom.⁶⁵

Ballanche died in the afternoon of Friday 12 June 1847. His last words, spoken to Récamier, fused the two affectivities that had governed his life: faith in the future promised by Christianity and love for Récamier: "Je m'endormirai dans le sein d'une grande espérance, et plein de confiance dans la pensée que votre souvenir et le mien vivront d'une même vie".⁶⁶ Victor de Laprade and Récamier kept the prayer vigil over Ballanche's body. Récamier, knowing that Ballanche had no near relatives still living, declared that he would be buried in her vault in Montmartre cemetery. At the funeral the chief mourners were Jean-Jacques Ampère and Charles Lenormant, representing the family of the Abbaye-aux-Bois. Alexis de Tocqueville spoke in the name of the Académie française and Victor de Laprade in the name of *l'école et la patrie lyonnaise*.⁶⁷

Ballanche's death left Récamier distraught. Her one concern, aside from fending off a proposal of marriage from Chateaubriand (Mme. de Chateaubriand had died in February 1847), was to perpetuate the memory of her friend. To this end she carried off Jean-Jacques Ampère to her niece's estate in Normandy and set him to composing a memorial volume. This work, the *Ballanche* of 1848, is not a biography but rather a collection of extracts from Ballanche's own writings, chosen to exemplify his central ideas and prose style, supplemented by excerpts from his correspondence and a commentary by Ampère. Récamier, seated in an avenue of beech trees that had been named the *allée d'Orphée*, supervised the composition of this work: she had Ampère read his drafts to her and the final decision over its content was hers.⁶⁸

The surviving principals of the Abbaye-aux-Bois circle did not long outlive Ballanche. Chateaubriand died in July 1848 and Réca-

⁶⁵ Marquiset, *Ballanche et Mme. d'Hautefeuille*, 260–261.

⁶⁶ Quoted in Edmond Biré, *Les Dernières Années de Chateaubriand* (Paris: Garnier, 1905), 386. How appropriate that Ballanche's last words should be recorded in a book devoted the memory of his great rival. The identical sentence appears in Ballanche to Récamier, 30 August 1832, in Kettler, *Lettres de Ballanche à Madame Récamier*, 586.

⁶⁷ J.-J. Ampère, *Ballanche* (Paris: René, 1848), 245.

⁶⁸ Lenormant, *Souvenirs et correspondances*, 2:260.

mier succumbed to cholera the next May.⁶⁹ Today, Chateaubriand's tomb defies wind and sea on an island off Saint-Malo, while in Montmartre cemetery, a few steps from the tomb of the two Ampères, one may read "Dans ce tombeau sont réunis les restes mortels de Jeanne-Françoise-Julie-Adélaïde Récamier, née Bernard; de Jacques-Rose Récamier, son mari; de Jean Bernard, son père; de Marie-Julie Matton, sa mère; et de Pierre-Simon Ballanche, son ami".

⁶⁹ Joseph Buche, *L'Ecole mystique de Lyon* (Paris: Alcan, 1935), 272.

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